

You Can Run – Chapter 1

Run? Run where? That goes back to the old expression, you can run, but you can't hide. The 'new' used calibrated CD V-717 arrived via Priority Mail two days earlier. Sharon and I were still trying to get a handle on our preps, they weren't going well. Like so many would be survivalists, our/my appetite was bigger than our bank account. To do things right, we'd need about \$15,000 and that didn't include a bomb/storm shelter.

The cheapest alternative I could find wasn't all that cheap. The deal Utah Shelter Systems was offering ran about \$45,300 plus for a 10'x50' shelter. Their ad said, "Complete Shelter Includes: One 36-inch diameter entrance with 90 degree turn and horizontal and vertical runs; one 48 inch diameter entrance with 90 degree turn and horizontal and vertical runs; two hardened blast doors; 6-inch diameter steel intake air-vent with manifold welded in place; two, 6-inch diameter exhaust and intake air pipes to surface with goose neck turn at top; two ladders; complete floor system with removable center panels; three full shelter lengths unistrut; AC & DC wiring system with DC light fixtures; ANDAIR AV-150 air ventilation and filtration unit (177 cfm unfiltered & 88 cfm filtered); end plates painted with epoxy rust inhibitor; white primer coat painted on inside surface of shelter body."

The alternative would be to excavate a large hole and have a contractor erect a concrete block shelter. He wanted \$35 per lineal foot for a 6' high wall. He implied building a shelter would run about \$50/lineal foot, not counting the extras, floor, lid, black water tank with a sewage pump, fresh water tank, fuel tank, generator, air filtration system, filter and shelter fixtures. Our last name wasn't Rockefeller. The shelter I had in mind was 35'x55', 180' times \$50 plus... say \$20-\$25 thousand unequipped. Add to that \$5k for the air filter, \$10k for a generator, \$3.5k for a blast door, \$2.5k for the waste water tank and pump, \$3.5k for a fresh water tank, who knows how much for a fuel tank, probably more than \$5k. That assumed that the shelter was all electric.

The total, without fuel, was \$51k. And, that didn't include furnishings, so call it \$60k plus the cost of the fuel. Diesel was running right at \$3/gallon. On top of that add the cost of LTS food for say 2 years, \$10k, maybe a weapon or two with ammo and it was tipping the scales at 100 grand. And for what? So we could crawl out after 2 weeks to 90 days into a world gone mad? There were no good scenarios about WW III. The people in Lawrence, Kansas had it relatively easy in that film, *The Day After*.

Since 9/11, there had been an ongoing terrorist threat; the DHS never lowered the Threat Level below Yellow. For Airline travel, you were looking at Orange or Red level. Sharon was still willing to fly, but I'd rather walk, even if it took me a whole day to walk from home to downtown Palmdale. And man, did I ever want to get out of the People's Republik of Kalifornia. About the only good thing a person could say about Kalifornia was that if the feds reinstated the AWB, it wouldn't affect the citizens of Kalifornia.

The great state of Kalifornia had more than its share of fanatics, far left, mostly, but a small population on the far right. We also had enough Muslims to create their own in-

surgency. Worse, we had more than our fair share of illegal immigrants. The one thing you could say about Kalifornia was that it had more of everything bad and much less of everything good. The list of things you couldn't own was much longer than the list of things you could have.

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"Have you filled my prescriptions yet?"

"No."

"Why not? We seem to have plenty of money for junk and things that we don't need. I need those prescriptions to make sure I have a 6 month supply of all my medications."

"What about me?"

"Ask Dr. J to write you a 90 day supply of everything you take with 1 refill. Better yet, have him give you 3 refills and you'll have a one year supply. Now, while we're on the subject of preparations, I believe that's it's time to expand our food supplies. We can start by adding 6 more cans of coffee and 3 more bundles of toilet paper. You let me know when we have a good month and I'll go with you to Costco and Sam's Club. I have a list that I'd like to see filled."

"What's on your list?"

"One additional case of all the vegetables to begin with. More staples, canned meat, extra cigarettes, food, you know, just the stuff we eat."

"What do you want, a 6-month supply?"

"You know what they call a 6-month supply of food?"

"What?"

"A good start."

She looked at me, shook her head and left. As long as we had our daughter living with us, it would never change. Ron had the same problem with Kevin. John lived there too, but he paid his mother rent. Brenda had gotten married and had moved to Lancaster. Kevin would save his money, rent an apartment and move out. It wouldn't take long before he was in trouble, again. The kind of trouble that took a lawyer to solve. After a few episodes of that, they'd moved Kevin back home and told him if he left again, he was on his own. He planted himself in this room and only came out for meals.

Amy had tried everything to get on with the Sheriff's Department. Instead, she'd ended up working for DCFS, the Department of Children's and Family Services. It was a per-

manent job and she had pretty good benefits. If she'd just stay there, she'd be doing very well for herself in short order. While the state of Kalifornia didn't have tenure, they had a strong union and once a person got past probation, they usually had a job for life. Her previous job had been with the outside contractor that Los Angeles County used to handle Child Support payments. When the County took over the job from the contractor, she hadn't been retained.

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Believe me when I say that if we moved it would reduce Sharon's stress level 100 fold. Sharon was running a taxi service, taking the kids to school and picking them up at different times. We had to change my doctor appointments because it interfered with her taxi driver job. My slow burning fuze was lit and burning; it was just a matter of time. I make lists, it's part of whatever mental disorder I have (obsessive-compulsive). On my firearms list, I had the following: 1 add'l M1A loaded, 2 PT1911s, 2 Mossberg 590A1s 12 gauge 20" shotguns with magazine extensions and ghost sights, cylinder choke, 1 Marlin 39A Golden trigger lever action .22 rifle or a good use 9422, 8,000 more rounds of 7.62x51mm NATO, 147gr FMJ, 2,000 rounds 230gr, Gold Dot and 2,000 more of Speer Lawman .45ACP, 20 bricks of .22LR ammo 2 cases of slugs and 2 cases of 12-pellet 00 buckshot.

I'd top that off by adding 30 of the 20-round M1A magazines, 10 extra Taurus 8-round magazines and another Tac-Force Chest harness. I might even splurge on another Rambo I knife and a full set of sharpening stones. 'They' won't deliver magazines with a capacity greater than 10 rounds to Kalifornia, so you have to use a straw man and have him/her reshipe them, or so I've heard. I needed to add a couple of Gerber Multi-tools or Leatherman Wave's.

With those weapons, I'd have what I call a good start. I'd have to add the cowboy guns, probably used Colt SAAs and naturally the Laredoan cross draw rig. Next it would be a Winchester .45 Colt rifle and finally a Marlin 1895 Cowboy .45/70; plus plenty of ammo, maybe 1,000 rounds of .45/70 and 2,500 rounds of .45 Colt. Two of those Otis Tactical cleaning kits and a couple of cans of Breakfree CLP, and I'd be almost set. More? Right, you haven't heard me mention a M82A1, have you? Or, 1,000 rounds of Raufoss ammo? I now Liked the Macmillan Tac-50 which was more accurate and cost less. Those M1As, would be nicer with suppressors, now wouldn't they? I'm sort of partial to the Surefire suppressors because, they've never worn one out, yet. Well, wish in one hand and spit in the other... I probably have to wait to buy more guns until after we bought a carpet shampooer and we don't have any carpet.

I'd store most of my firearms in the shelter we don't have. Did I leave anything out? You didn't hear me mention radios, now did you? Fill in the blanks, I've told you 50 times what I like. If I do get business radios, I might just as well get the ones with 32 channels. A man and his dreams, that's all that I am; I don't know enough to be happy with what I have. I have a M1A Loaded rifle and 14 battle packs of South African ammo, seven per partial ammo can. Magazines, well, let's just say I have more than one and leave it at

that. Many of the things I want are illegal anyway. If not outright illegal, they're illegal in the PRK.

I sort of edged into the conversation with Sharon, mentioning an email I got from A Friend. I discussed several things, not the least of which was the fact that one city in the country was working their buns off getting prepared for WW III. That's right, one community actually took the threat serious. So I asked if she minded if I forwarded the email.

"Is this about the threat of nuclear war?"

"Yes, it is."

"So you actually believe if a warhead lands in our backyard we'd have a chance?"

"If a warhead actually lands in our backyard, we wouldn't be safe in a shelter buried 500' deep dear."

Straight honest answer right? They're not so sure that Cheyenne Mountain could survive a direct hit. The shelter I had in mind would only have 10' of dirt for cover over 1' of concrete. Hell, you could take that out with a JDAM. Bottom line was she wasn't interested.

Like a fool, I ask, "What's the deal, you been shining me on?"

"I've been humoring you, yes."

My jaw hit the floor and bounced up so hard it nearly took my teeth out. Humoring me? Humoring me? Well! When I began to think about it, many things became clear. That 21ft³ freezer, which could hold enough meat for 6 months or more didn't really have much meat in it. A few packages of frozen vegetables, some ice cream and some boxed meats. I could have gotten 100# of ground beef on a single shelf, but ground beef wasn't pork steak or pork chops.

Now understand, I wasn't angry. I was so far past angry, I couldn't talk. I guess that explained why we had money to buy junk, but not enough to buy the pills I need to assure me a 6 months' supply, or her for a matter of fact. It also explained why I had a 7kw generator and only 10 gallons of gas, even though I had 7 5-gallon gas cans and 2 pints of PRI-G. She had told someone we had about \$3,900 a month income and less than \$400 a month came from her pension.

The only reason we had as much food as we did was because I was a nag. Why not have 6 bundles of Charmin, it doesn't spoil. I went to the garage and began checking, 16# of sugar and 0# of flour. I think the homemade bread will be a little on the sweet side. The only thing that we really had a lot of is coffee, 12 cans, about a 12 week supply. Those 2 drugs I needed weren't critical; I could take aspirin instead of Plavix and just be depressed, I'm not so sure the Zoloft did any good. I was way ahead on blood

pressure, diabetes and ulcer meds, almost 8 months' worth of some. It would be easier to ask her to get me another bottle of aspirin and forget the rest.

The next time she went to Costco and Sam's Club, I'd insist on going along. I'd buy the beans and rice and I'd eat, even if they wouldn't. I'd better get my good Coleman stove back from Lorrie, while I can, or get the old one and repair it. I see about buying ground beef and diced tomatoes when we went. Maybe a container of chili powder and some dried onion flakes. When the system won't work with you, you have to work around it, ergo, don't get mad, get even. (Everyone needs a plan B.)

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Darn it, I didn't set the wall clock and I was watching it instead of the clock on my computer and missed the beginning of *The Day After Tomorrow*. So, I'll watch channel 150 and watch *California Firestorm* from the beginning. That way I can watch the entire movie from the start and to hell with the other show.

I could add the PRI-G when she brought it home and agitate it until the PRI-G was blended in. It was supposed to be warm for the next few days; I'd better fuel that PowerBOSS generator and make sure it runs. I better stop daydreaming about all the things I wanted and concentrate on getting the things we needed. One way to get gas for the generator was to watch her gas tank and give her a 5-gallon can to fill every time she needed gas. I did her a favor by putting some hydrocortisone on her itch and mentioned the gas when I did it. She said put PRI-G in first and I said, 'Nope just grab an empty can and tell me when you get home and I'll add it'.

It's all in the timing, don't you see? I needed a lot of things for us, including 25 more gallons of gasoline. You get what you can, when you can and you get even, eventually. I wanted to know more about this movie, but couldn't find it on IMDb. It had another title, *Inferno (2002)*. I found it by checking the actress. There more than one way to skin a cat or get gas.

What does timing have to do with toilet paper? I can answer that 2 ways, when you need it, it's not the time to be out of it; however, if mama doesn't want six bundles of toilet paper and does all the shopping maybe it's time for you to go to Costco with her when she shops. That's especially true if it's your money she's spending. You should have some say on how it's spent. I had looked at the issue and felt 3 cases each of green beans, Nibbles, diced tomatoes and Mexicorn was the way to go. That's 3 full cases of each on the shelf with a partial case not counting.

Take oatmeal for example, 2 full cartons on the shelf and an open carton in the kitchen, Pancake mix? Two full bags on the shelf and 3 packs of Aunt Jemima plus the open package. Each package contains 2 bottles. Oatmeal is good for breakfast, cookies and a few other uses, even bread. Soup – 1 full case each of tomato and mushroom plus any partial cases and probably a few packages of Lipton Onion Soup, for soup or dips. What about the things we don't eat a lot of? Yeah I know beans and rice, 50 pounds of

each plus whatever is open. To add variety, add 10 pounds each of kidney, great northern and small white beans.

If you want some very good soup for a change, try Wolfgang Puck's beef and barley, it's about the best I've ever eaten.

That 21 ft³ freezer should contain 100 one-pound packages of good ground beef, some boneless beef roasts, maybe some boneless pork chops and pork steak, if you like it. I want about 10 or more round steaks and I'd add some pork sausage and bacon and maybe a few cure 81 hams. Shelf meat can include tuna, chicken, beef, beef stew and don't forget the Spam. You can adjust the meat to suit your preferences and do the same with the vegetables. To round out the shelves, I like the canned peaches that come in the one quart jar. They also have pears. Add a few boxes of Jello and maybe some fruit cocktail. If you're into puddings add those, but don't forget the powdered milk. Powdered eggs beat the hell out of not having eggs.

The main problem with those boxed meats is twofold, it's a big box when compared to the contents and it's expensive. My favorite steak is a club steak or a sirloin. Mostly meat and very little fat. Finally, beef and pork is fine, but a few whole chickens take little space and add variety. Speaking of which, you should have 3-4 6# cans of Crisco and a couple of gallons of oil. You also need another fat, butter or margarine. You'll need vinegar and a fair amount of table salt and pickling salt. I'd limit the flour to 100# and either get bread flour or gluten to add so you get good bread.

Plain food is boring, so don't forget the spices. I also recommend a couple of containers of brown gravy mix, some soy sauce, ketchup, mustard and extra pepper. You heard what Emeril has to say about spices, but the basics don't spoil as fast as he seems to think. I said flour for bread so you'll need yeast, baking powder and baking soda. We use one 57oz. can of coffee per week and brew it with a drip coffee maker, so we also need filters in addition to the coffee. If you have to have creamer, don't forget that. Treats? I keep a couple of boxes of Snickers Almond in one of the refrigerators.

I've left off things like cookie mixes, cake mixes, canned frosting, Cocoa as in baking cocoa and drinking cocoa, although I can make drinking cocoa from baking cocoa. I prefer Hershey's to Nestles for hot chocolate, but they dropped it. As far as pasta goes, you'll want at least elbow macaroni and spaghetti plus some kind of pasta sauce. Don't forget the Kraft macaroni and cheese, it's easy and quick and most kids love it. I think 30 boxes minimum. Unlike most GIs, I loved SOS fixed nice and thick and served over toast and topped with eggs. Think hamburger gravy if that sounds better. Biscuits and gravy usually refers to sausage gravy. About the only thing I can think of that I left off is cheese. Velveeta is probably the easiest route to go, but that's a matter of personal taste.

The best time to make a list like the one I just made is when you're hungry; you think of most everything you need.

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I sat and talked to Sharon for a long time, discussing the possible outcomes, if we did have WW III. Her concerns were valid, she thought they'd hit LA and Edwards, but Plant 42 was all but shut down so she didn't really believe we'd get a bomb in the backyard. As she went through the issues she had, I tried to address them one at a time. Depending on the wind direction, we might or might not get fallout from LA and Edwards. I told her I thought it would be one or the other, not both. Then, I tried to explain my concept of being prepared. I may have even thrown in the comment, 'there's more than one way to skin a cat'.

I explained that if we could stay here, we'd need the generator and gasoline to preserve the food we had. If not, those cans of gas would allow us to Bug Out, as it were. 'Where would you go?' she asked. My reply must have surprised her, 'Damned if I know, how about California City?'

That opened a new can of worms. It seems that when Andy died, he had a firearms collection. Sister Charlene was concerned because some of his weapons used removable magazines and she wasn't sure they were legal. My immediate reply was, 'I'll take anything that is Kalifornia illegal, I couldn't care less.'

Knowing Andy, I half expected his collection would include an AR-15. They are, by definition, Kalifornia illegal. I probably wouldn't buy one if I could, but if someone gave me one, I'd never refuse it, especially if it was made by Colt. There were ways to get 30-round magazines and 5.56x45mm NATO ammo wasn't in short supply, yet. During the same conversation the subject of my getting the Mossberg 590A1 came up and while she didn't agree, she didn't say no.

Sharon took advantage of the conversation to ask why I had to have 2 survey meters, she called them Geiger Counters, that both had the same range 500R. I explained that the 717 had a cable and it could be used to take remote radiation readings while the 715 didn't and couldn't. I couldn't tell if I made any dent into her mindset beyond getting her to agree it was not if, but when and what. Her parting shot was, 'And what if we did survive? What kind of world would we be living in?'

She didn't wait for an answer, but that was the easy part, not a very nice place at all. Everything we now took for granted, grocery stores, utilities and security would be gone. It would be what Charles Darwin described, survival of the fittest and the most prepared. The next time she went for gas, she had me measure the PRI-G for 2 of the 5-gallon cans.

A short time later, maybe 2-3 weeks, Charlene and Geoff showed up with Andy's guns. She was talking about selling them to the gun store. I went through them, he had a riot gun, an AR-15, and a .357 magnum revolver. She was worried that his speed loaders might be illegal, they weren't. I told her the riot gun was legal and she should keep it. Then, being the kind hearted soul that I am, I pointed out that Kalifornia had banned

AR-15s but I'd be glad to take it off her hands. I was a good enough sport about it; I'd even take the 7 30-round magazines that Andy had. She knew about what he'd paid for it back in the '80s and said if she could get half what he paid, she'd sell it to me. For the grand sum of \$300, I had one each rifle, AR-15 and 7 magazines, USGI, 30-round; I liked the price...I hated the rifle.

Eric, the Ammoman, sells USGI, pre-ban 30-round magazines for \$300 for 15 magazines and the T-57 magazines for \$345 for 25 magazines. He gets \$569 for 2,000 rounds of SS-109. It was LEO, military or overseas shipment only. I got the magazines from him and surfed the web until I found a good price on SS-109 (M855) and no restrictions. Although I wanted more, I had to settle for 2,000 rounds. My magazines arrived with only 2 additional days in the transit time. I had purchased 15 and 25 and they came from Arkansas. I had the Tac-Force chest harness and another Rambo I, long before the magazines and ammo arrived. I set up the second chest harness about the same way I had the first one set up, except it was for the AR. It held a total of 20 magazines by putting 4 in each grenade pouch. A little duct tape and the other two magazines were taped together, ready to go.

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The next time Sharon went to Costco and Sam's Club, I insisted on going. It really didn't take that much to upgrade our food stores, but I can assure you she wasn't a happy camper. Especially when I bought 3 25# bags of pinto beans and a 50# bag of rice. In all fairness, what I added probably cost around \$200, maybe \$250, but it enhanced our food supply in multiples. I think the extra gallon of Dial soap irritated her as did the extra 6 cans of coffee over and above what she selected. It took about a week for her to get over it and agree to take me to Smart and Final. I picked up 20 pounds each of navy, great northern and kidney beans. I stopped there; I had pushed my luck about as far as I dared.

The following month, I gave her a list of what I wanted in lieu of tagging along. It really wasn't that much over what she intended to buy, except for the extra cigarettes and toilet paper and after a moment's consideration, she agreed. She also agreed to take my Rx to Costco and get me the 90 day supply of Zoloft, Plavix and Dyazide, all generic. She asked what I wanted for my birthday and I told her the Mossberg 590A1.

"What no ammo?"

"I'll order it over the internet to assure I get what I want."

It was like trying to assemble a 1,000 piece puzzle. What's the other analogy? Right, pulling hen's teeth. Somewhere in the process, I ended up with a full tank for the generator and the extra 35-gallons of stabilized gasoline. Lowe's had the 5-gallon Blitz cans on sale again, so I went for another 5, giving us a total of 12 cans or 60 gallons.

When the next large deposit went into the Iowa account, I ordered a case of 3" Brenneke slugs and 2 cases of 3" 15-pellet 00 buck and had the gas cans filled. We now had ~124 hours run time on the generator. I also added another 6 extra cans of coffee, 2 extra bundles of toilet paper and brought up the subject of my getting a Taurus PT1911. She must have been in a good mood, she agreed. Hell, she even took me to White's Surplus and I got a pistol belt, holster and 3 double magazine pouches. I made a phone call and was told I'd get them when they arrived. What? Oh, the 5 8-round magazines for my new pistol and the pistol. It seemed that the PT1911 was, you guessed it, illegal in Kalifornia.

We now had 25# of sugar, 100# of flour plus gluten and yeast so we could bake bread, if we had to. She had her own ideas about some things and I did notice more pancake mix, extra syrup and various 5# bags of desert mixes. I had hinted at hot chocolate mix and she bought 4 large cans (Nestles) and 4 boxes of Lipton tea bags.

We took a time out and surveyed the 'damage'. The shelves were full to overflowing. We were halfway there on the ground beef, up to 50#. She had gotten 4 pork loins on sale and I'd cut them into chops. She'd added a case of Hormel bean-less chili for chili dogs and a dozen packages of hot dogs. As far as I was concerned she had way too much pork steak, but it was a compromise, 1 ham and 1 beef roast for every package of pork steak she bought. We even had 12 1# packages of frozen bologna.

Moreover, I was up to 12 cartons of Kool's at the beginning of the month and had her talked into buying me 8 cartons a month. My measure of success would be when we had 30 cans of Folgers coffee on the shelf, we were up to 24. We also had 4 boxes of potato buds, you can't imagine what a fight they started. However, each box was equal to ~9 pounds of potatoes. Just so you'll know she felt about instant potatoes the way I felt about pork steak.

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I ordered 1,000 rounds of Speer .45ACP, 230gr Gold Dot and another 1,000 rounds of Lawman FMJ. And, in what could only be described as a medical miracle, she had kittens. From my initial list of firearms, I was getting very close, but not there, yet. Ron called and asked if I wanted to go to High Desert Storm. I could live there if the truth be known.

I was on a very limited budget, this trip. I got the 2 Otis cleaning kits and a second can of Breakfree. They had a Loaded in their rack. All I could do was drool. I mentioned it when Ron brought me home and she said, "Why didn't you buy it?"

I mind immediately ran to Redd Foxx, and I replied, "Elizabeth honey, I'm coming to join you." Followed by, "are you serious?"

Her reply, nearly floored me, "Yes, do you wanted me to take you?"

I managed to stammer out, "Yes, please."

Be still, my heart, she wrote a check and paid for it in full, ~ \$1,750. When we got home I began to shop for 7.62x51mm NATO ammo but the only thing I could find was South African, 980 round partial ammo cans. The price was bordering on astronomical, but I bought 5 giving me 5 full ammo cans and ammo to load the magazines. She didn't say much, although I expected something like an explosion. Somewhere, she must have taken something I'd said to heart. You can best describe my mood as bordering on, in if not actually being, in shock. The next 2 weeks were, very, very long.

General H. Norman Schwarzkopf KCB, also known as "Stormin' Norman" is a retired US Army general who, while he served as Commander-in-Chief (now known as "Combatant Commander") of US Central Command, was commander of the Coalition Forces in the Gulf War of '91. I thought Norman once described the Gulf War as shock and awe. I was wrong, it was Dubya, although it described my mood nearly exactly. I was, oh so close and yet oh so far, the .50BMG was not only Kalifornia illegal, it was also a source of much contention for Ronnie Barrett.

The Barrett Firearms company was founded by the Ronnie Barrett for a single purpose of building semi-automatic rifles chambered for powerful .50BMG ammunition, originally developed for and used in Browning M2HB heavy machine guns. Barrett began his work in early 1980s and first working rifles were available in 1982, hence the designation M82. Barrett continued to develop his rifle through 1980s, and developed improved M82A1 rifle by 1986. The first real success was the purchase of about 100 M82A1 rifles by the Swedish Army in 1989. Major success followed in 1990 - 1991, when US Military purchased numbers of the M82A1 during the operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in Kuwait and Iraq.

About 125 rifles were initially bought by US Marine Corps, orders from US Army and Air Force followed soon. The M82A1 is known for US Military as the SASR - "Special Applications Scoped Rifle", and it was and still is used as an anti-matériel weapon and EOD (explosive ordnance disposal) tool. The long effective range along with high energy and availability of highly effective ammunition such as API and Raufoss Mk 211 allows for effective operations against targets like radar cabins, trucks, parked aircrafts and so on. M82 also can be used to defeat enemy snipers or criminals from standoff range or when targets are behind the cover, but the anti-personnel work is not a major application for Barrett M82 (or any other .50BMG rifle, for that matter), according to Modern Firearms.

When an LAPD Officer had the unmitigated gall to hold up his Barrett M82A1 rifle during a hearing over banning the large caliber rifle and LAPD subsequently sent an M82A1 to Barrett Firearms for repair, Ronnie Barrett to his total credit, returned the unrepaired firearm to LAPD with a now famous letter. May God Bless You Ronnie Barrett! Of course, as we know all know, Kalifornia, to its everlasting SHAME, banned all .50BMG rifles.

You Can Run – Chapter 2

Is there a way to get an .50BMG if you live in Kalifornia? That depends on how far you're willing to go to get rifle and don't forget the scope. Are you sure you want that BORS on the rifle? You may not need it if you have a laser rangefinder and a really good scope that's calibrated to the ammo you're using. The way you get an M82A1 in Kalifornia is through a straw man purchase or by having someone give one as a gift. Then all you have to do is get it by the Agricultural Inspection Station.

For the sake of argument, let's assume you have the money for the M82A1 and maybe several extra magazines and a very good scope. We'll pretend your name is Gates. How much will you need to spend? Simple, you decide which rifle you want, add up the price of the rifle and must have accessories plus tax. What are you planning on shooting in it? Mk 211 MP ammo? That's the ammo that the rifle is intended to shoot. If you're going to be using it in Kalifornia, they can only lock you up once, so why not?

You might have a bit of trouble finding the ammo, and when you do find it, plan to spend lots of money. That's ok, your name is Gates. With 1,200 rounds of very illegal ammo, you've probably invested a total of maybe \$30 thousand. Is the Barrett accurate enough or are there better choices? McMillan, the stock people? No kidding and the complete rifle is far less expensive? What's his name used Hornady A-MAX in Afghanistan for a long shot kill? Five bucks a round, hmm.

The rifle and ammo run about ½ the cost of that shelter I wanted. While the rifle may protect us from the bad guys, it won't protect us if we get fallout. Besides, as soon as I pick up the second M1A, I'd have 3 rifles, one shotgun and the first of two PT1911s. There's still the Nazi .32 and all it needs is more ammo. Up to this point, Sharon has been very understanding and I owe it to her to find some way to get ready in case this world situation escalates into something well beyond our control.

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"Hey."

"Hey butthead, what's up?"

"You know the Loaded we saw at High Desert Storm?"

"What about it?"

"I told Sharon about it."

"Yeah, I mentioned it to Lyn and she said I could buy it. I went back and it had already been sold."

"I know, I bought it."

"Yeah right. With tax and fees, it would go for about \$1,800."

"Plus the cost of more ammo, 25 magazines and a sling. No kidding man, Sharon took me down and we bought it. I got on the net, and ordered magazines and ammo for the AR-15 I got from Charlene and while I was at it, I got 25 more T-57 magazines. I also ordered another 2,000 rounds of 7.62x51mm NATO ammo."

"What AR-15?"

"The one I got from Charlene. It belonged to Andy and was illegal as all get out. I helped her out and bought it and 7 magazines for \$300."

"Colt?"

"Yep. She felt good about it and I was more than happy to help her out."

"Did you bother telling her it was worth at least a grand? I'll bet you didn't, did you?"

"I told her the truth, Ronald, it is illegal and so are those 30-round magazines. I gave her half of what Andy paid for the rifle back in the '80s. That's about what a gun dealer would have given her, provided he was willing to buy the rifle. That's not why I called."

"Why did you call if it wasn't to gloat?"

"We're well stocked on essentials, partner; the only thing we really need is a shelter."

"Yeah, you and me both."

"In the stories I write, you always stay with us anyway. What say I get a big hole excavated in my backyard and we put in a couple of sections of culvert?"

"How much will that cost?"

"Maybe a grand."

"A grand? Are you nuts? You told me that one section of culvert ran about \$8,000, or did you forget?"

"I'm, talking about the cost of excavation. I think I know where I can get 2 used sections of culvert for the cost of having it trucked here."

"Bull."

"No, really. A few years back, I did an audit on a company up near Fresno that manufactured large culvert. They had a large pile of used culvert that wasn't much good. It

had rusted through in a few places and wouldn't hold water. I asked about it and they said it was free for the taking. It might cost \$500 a section to get it hauled down here."

"You said it was rusted."

"It was, but not so bad a person couldn't patch it. USS recommends that if you put in two pieces of pipe, they be one pipe diameter apart from each other. We could close off one end and use another, smaller pipe to connect the two. That could be our common access, too. I have the gasoline generator, and it should produce enough power for a shelter. For about \$2 grand we'd have a shelter with a generator."

"Right. What about the air purifier, waste water disposal, fresh water tank and the fuel tank?"

"Do you know where you can get a 3,000 gallon propane tank that wouldn't certify because of the pressure but would hold unpressurized fuel?"

"When we had one that wouldn't certify, we sold it as scrap steel."

"So you know who to ask?"

"Yep. What about the water and sewage?"

"Plastic tanks. Say one holding 5,000 gallons of fresh water and one holding 1,000 gallons of black water."

"Might work. Know where to get them?"

"I have a website."

"Anyway, I asked him to check and he found another Loaded rifle so I bought it."

"Order 25 mags from Ammoman and have them delivered to an address I'll give you. I'd be willing to buy 5 of the mags, giving you 20. It will only slow down the delivery about 1-2 days."

"I'll trade you 5 M1A magazines for 5 AR-15 magazines. I got the sling from Santa Fe Gun Galleria."

"Deal. I'll give you a website where you can order South African 7.62x51mm NATO. Get 5 980-round cases."

"Wait."

"What?"

"The air purification system. What do you intend to do about that?"

"Sharon Packer needs the money. Chris can fashion us a blast door."

"In exchange for what?"

"A place in the shelter."

"How much is this all going to cost?"

"Probably under \$10,000, depending on what the fuel tank costs."

"Does that include filling the fuel tank?"

"No."

o

First I checked on the pipe, they had plenty and remembered me even though the audit had been 20 years ago. I'd helped them solve a small computer problem they had. They told me they'd truck it if I reimbursed their cost, figure \$350 per section. They had a pickup to make in LA anyway, or it would have been more. As it was, I was paying for the little trucks with the yellow lights for an over-wide/over length load. Never look a gift horse in the mouth! That had been the very first audit I'd ever used *The Iowa Auditor* on. They came to LA weekly, let them know when I wanted the culvert.

I had the name of the guy who leveled the backyard and he knew an excavation contractor. We worked a deal and they would dig the hole and remove half the soil for \$1,250. I had to give my neighbor \$100 so they could use his backyard like they had the last time. The last time, my neighbor had been Joe. This time it was that bunch we didn't get along with.

I figured by buying them off, I wouldn't have any obligation to them, should we need to use the shelter. Ron couldn't get a 3,000 gallon tank but he could get a 5,000-gallon tank. That would work, it much easier to put 3k in a 5k tank than it is to put 5k in a 3k tank.

The next step was to dig the hole, get the culvert, patch it and put a coat of tar on it. The building supply sold me a tar based sealing compound and 2 8" wide brushes typically used for that purpose. When the hole was excavated, we added pea gravel and put some 2x4s crosswise to set on culvert in. I timed it so the crane arrived shortly after the culvert and they were lifted over the house and one set in the hole and the other above the hole. I sent a check for \$2,600 to USS and they could order the AV-150 as soon as the check cleared. Meanwhile Ronald inspected the culvert and used some small pieces of extra culvert they'd thrown in and pop rivets to patch the holes. We then applied a

coat of tar by hand, rolling the culvert to give us access. We removed the 2x4s letting the culvert lay on the pea gravel.

The culvert up above was anchored in place and the holes patched and all but the bottom cover with tar. We used 2 lengths of rope tied to 2 patio roof supports and extending under the second culvert and back over the top. We threw two turns of the rope around the same two posts and with me standing in the middle with a rope in each hand, Ron pushed forward on the culvert and it started to roll into the hole. He came back and took one rope and I kept the other. As we let out slack, the culvert was lowered into the hole.

We used stakes to hold the culverts in place and began to excavate depressions for the plastic water and sewage tank (they hadn't arrived yet). Dick said he'd help with the plumbing and Chris tack welded the flooring supports in place. When he was done, I checked the outside of the culvert and touched up a couple of spots where the tar melted. The fuel tank came the next day and we rolled it in place in the 10' deep depression behind the shed where we intended to put it.

We were ready to lay the floor in the culverts using 2 laminated sheets of OSB. We glued the sheets together and added ring shank nails. That took the better part of a day. We set the plastic tanks in the boxes we build in the depressions to hold them when they came the next day. Dick came over Saturday and plumbed everything together. The tank boxes were built of OSB and had OSB covers. Monday they brought the rock and we filled the hole to the midlevel of the culverts.

One end of the culverts was covered by OSB cut to fit and a second laminated layer not cut to size. We applied silicon to seal that end and added the pea rock followed by left over soil, finishing that end. We took the next day off, Ron had honey do's to complete and I was tired. That and I needed to get caught up on the news.

The news – same stuff, different day. More casualties in Iraq, some kind of threat from the Iranian big mouth, aimed this time at Russia plus Venezuela had cut off our oil. He could do that now, Russia had completed the deliveries of the planes and other things Hugo bought. Bush vetoed that bill forcing a cutoff of the funds for Afghanistan and Iraq. I doubted they Congress had enough votes to override the veto. Osama bin Laden had released another audio tape but I didn't get any details.

"Can you get by without me until Tuesday"

"Newport weekend?"

"Yeah, it completely slipped my mind."

"See you Tuesday."

"Sorry."

"I was going to say the same thing."

Rather than putting the generator in the connecting culvert, I build a small room to hold it located not far from the fuel tank. With some help from Dick and Chris, we plumbed the fuel line directly to the motor in a way that allowed the generator to run off its own tank or the large fuel tank. The delivery from Switzerland came and I paid the driver the balance due. Dick and Chris helped me install the air system pipe and blast valves. He was still working to the blast door. After Chris left, Dick and I connected the intake and exhaust pipes to the generator and installed the blast valves in the rock crib like USS suggested.

o

Before we went further, I wanted to put a refrigerator, freezer, sink and stove in the shelter kitchen area. We also needed a stool, small shower and bathroom sink. Sharon I picked up the shower at Lowes and we had the other 3 things plus our old microwave (over the stove) oven. We also got some metal kitchen cabinets, an electric stove and 2 small under the sink water heaters. I could run power from the main fuse panel down the pipe under the sidewalk and over to a switch box in the generator room, allowing us to use house power to keep the appliances running when the generator wasn't fired up.

Sharon took me to pick up the M1A on Tuesday morning and Lance came over when he saw us coming home.

"Putting in a pool?"

"I wish, want to see?"

"Sure, new rifle?"

"My second M1A. Here, check it out."

"Nice, just like mine."

"See our pool?"

"What the heck? A bomb shelter?"

"Yeah, seen the news lately?"

"You knew I got a M1A and some of that South African surplus?"

"You mentioned it. Did you get the magazines I mentioned?"

"Had them shipped to a friend in Arizona. Pretty slick. How much ammo do you have now?"

"6,860 of the 7.62×51mm and 2,000 of the 5.56×45mm."

"What's left to do on your shelter?"

"We need bunks, we need to move the food from the garage, I need to fill the generator fuel tank and I need radios. Plus, we have to install the electric stove, plumbing fixtures and kitchen appliances. I have a whole set of cookware we can use and we'll probably get some melamine from Wal-Mart and silverware. If everything works out, we'll be done in 2 weeks."

"Maybe we should consider putting in a shelter."

"We have plenty of room, want to buy in?"

"What do you need?"

"Gasoline. I planned on a 3,000-gallon tank, but ended up with a 5,000-gallon tank. I'm going to order 4 gallons of PRI-G from Oregon to stabilize the fuel and all we'll need is the gasoline."

"Your friend owns a part share?"

"Yes, we both put up \$5,000."

"Is that the price of a share?"

"Hadn't thought about it, but it seems fair."

"If we bought \$5,000 worth of gas, we'd have a place?"

"You have a place without a buy in, but you might have to crank the air blower and eat cold food."

"I'll talk to Elvia."

◦

I called around and the cheapest bulk delivery of gasoline I could find ran \$2.50 a gallon.

Tuesday afternoon and Wednesday, Ron and I finished off the kitchen, moved the appliances and installed the plumbing. Dick told me he'd be back when it was installed to

plumb it in. On Thursday and Friday we covered over most of the shelter, only leaving room for Dick to do the plumbing.

On Saturday, Chris delivered the blast door and we installed the connecting tunnel, the blast door and finished the plumbing. All that was left was to finish covering over the shelter, installing the CD V-717 cable and a pipe for radio coax. Lance came by and said he ordered 2,000 gallons of gas, so he and Elvia were in. They'd be delivering the gasoline on Monday. I already had the 4 gallons of PRI-G and 4 gallons of PRI-D that I bought from BatteryStuff.com.

Chris and Dick wanted to know what that was about, so I explained that a buy in was \$5,000, either in cash or supplies. I also told them that they had a place with or without a buy in, but I needed all the help I could get to finish off the shelter. Dick said he could go for another 1,000 gallons of gas, and would return my 39' mast. He'd also help finishing off the shelter and might be able to get some 30" cot mattresses. Chris asked what else we needed and I said bunks and showed him a picture on the USS website. He thought he could fashion something to hold the cot mattress and a piece of OSB as a mattress board out of square tubing and angle iron.

Using bunk beds he could put 24 bunks in one culvert and we could use that for the bedroom, toilet and the AV-150. The other culvert would have the kitchen, radio shack and a day/dining room. He wanted to leave the west end open until everything was in place. I told him fine, as long as it didn't take too long. Dave added another 1,000-gallons.

◦

Radio shack? Ron had 6 40-channel CBs he was willing to donate. Chris had those 3 racing radios and the 3 Bearcat scanners. Dick had a shortwave receiver. Both Ron and I were running short of money.

Four weeks later, it was done and sealed up. It was very large but depending on how many people we put down there, it could get crowded. The five families (see the last story) all came up with something that constituted a buy in. Dick and Dave both added 1,000 gallons of gas, giving us 4,000-gallons. I hadn't pulled any building permits on the shelter, afraid that word would get out.

I added up the power requirements and we'd have to be very careful because the generator was so small. Chris said he could yank the 5kw generator from the truck in 5 minutes if we'd need it. I told him we might need it as a backup. Dick said he modify the intake and exhaust systems to allow us to hook in Chris's generator.

Among us, we had 4 M1As, 1 AR-15, numerous handguns, shotguns plus Ron's rifle collection. A decision was reached that everyone would store ½ of their ammo in the shelter and the other half at home. I had moved the radiation equipment and pills to the shelter. The others got together and ordered more KIO₃. Because it was so inconven-

ient storing all of the frozen goods in the shelter, we kept some in the two freezing compartments in the house. About half of the canned goods and LTS foods went into the shelter.

Over the course of the next few months, I was able to increase our supply of ground beef from 50 to 100 pounds. We added additional hams, bacon, sausage, Spam, chicken, beef, tuna and frozen chickens. Food wise, everyone contributed a little and we soon had the shelter shelves filled. I suggested a trial run to see what it might be like to spend a weekend in the shelter, but everyone was too busy, had other plans or didn't like the idea. Except for the gasoline, most of the equity in the shelter came in the form of sweat equity or furnishings. Later in the year, I finally got a ham radio and the 10 band antenna. I also picked up a good used CM300 and an antenna for that. I kept all of the radio equipment in a grounded metal cabinet in the shelter.

Instead of the situation improving in Iraq, it was going downhill fast. Every day some new Senator or Representative would call for a troop reduction or pull out. DHI had twice raised the Threat Level to Orange, briefly, when they had some real or imagined terrorist threat on the horizon. The H5N1 hadn't yet mutated to human form, but worldwide, the number of case and deaths had doubled.

o

Back during the Cold War, the Soviet Union had mass produced several diseases. One of them was smallpox and they produced 60,000 pounds as a biological weapon. They actually produced several diseases. I saw that on TV on MSNBC, I think. WHO certified the eradication of smallpox in 1979. My research showed:

Before the collapse of the USSR, all biological weapons programs were grouped under the single organization of Biopreparat (from 1973. Its 30,000 employees helped to develop research and to produce pathogenic weapons and antidotes for the defense of the Soviet Union. The Biopreparat complex suffered with the collapse of the USSR. Its current presence is greatly reduced, however it is likely that Biopreparat and successor entities continued bioweapons research and development at least through the mid to late 1990s.

Biopreparat was the largest producer of anthrax for the USSR. Additionally, Biopreparat was a leader in the development of new bioweapons technologies.

Pathogens that were successfully weaponized by the organization included (in order of completion):

- *Smallpox*
- *Bubonic plague*
- *Anthrax*
- *Venezuelan equine encephalitis*
- *Tularemia*

- *Influenza*
- *Brucellosis*
- *Marburg virus (believed to be under development as of 1992)*
- *Ebola (believed to be under development as of 1992)*
- *Machupo virus (believed to be under development as of 1992)*

The last 3 are all hemorrhagic viruses. Machupo comes from Brazil. I can only think of one comment: Nice doomsday weapons.

◦

Bush couldn't veto the next bill Congress passed; it had a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority in both the House and the Senate. It mandated a phased withdrawal of our troops from Iraq. Overall, a 10% reduction per month, which would have all of the troops home from Iraq in 10 months. To ensure that it happened the way they wanted, the funding was to be reduced in the same proportion. During the two following months, the troops would be brought home from Afghanistan. Bush went on TV and made a speech when he vetoed the bill. Within 48 hours, both the House and Senate had overridden the veto. The die was cast.

The matter made it through federal district court, appellate court and to the Supreme Court in near record time. The first two courts both upheld the law. It seemed obvious that they were just passing the buck to the Supreme Court. Cert was granted and the Court heard oral arguments a week later. Three weeks after that, they ruled 5-4 in favor of Congress.

Representative Murtha (Pa) was beside himself with glee. Only John McCain spoke out against the override. Because the DOD was thinking about sending my son back to Iraq for a 2nd tour, I was delighted. It does make a difference when it's your kid over there.

Ships were sent to friendly ports to transport the equipment and troops back, mostly the equipment. The majority of the troops, except for the Marines, would fly back. Bush announced he was sending two additional CSGs to cover the withdrawal. A poll indicated that a majority of Americans asked favored the Congressional action. I gave up watching cable news when it got to the point that the only guy I liked on TV was my favorite 600-yard target (Geraldo).

It took 2 gallons of PRI-G per year to ensure the gas remained fresh so I bought another 4-gallon case. I still had my gas cans and every time I got 60 gallons built up, I'd add it to the tank. She'd buy me one can a week so I'd do that every 12 weeks. I know that's only 240 gallons a year, but every little bit helps. Gas was up to \$3 a gallon for the cheap stuff and could only go up. In a little over a year, I'd be 65½ which would force me off disability and onto Social Security. I don't know why, but that bothered me.

You Can Run – Chapter 3

Preps wise, I had all of my meds and we were working on getting Sharon's built up to the same 6 month supply I had. The thing was, except for those 3 oddball drugs, I was now up to a 9 month supply. So, I went for another 90 day supply plus one refill on those three. Sharon had done as I had asked and gotten Dr. J to write a 90-day supply for all her drugs with 3 refills, which she filled at Costco.

Because nothing dramatic happened, some of the folks who bought in with gasoline wanted their money back. In general terms, they seemed to think that the danger was over with us pulling out of the Middle East. I realized that altogether, they wanted \$10 grand and there wasn't any way I could come up with the money quickly. I told them that and offered to pump gas back out of the tank if necessary. I called Ron and told him my problem and he said he'd get back to me, he need to talk to Linda.

He called back 2 days later and said they could come up with half, \$5,000. I gave Lance \$2,500 and Dick and Dave \$1,250 each, buying back a portion of their shares. Next, I tried talking to Matt and explaining my problem. He said the best they could do was a principal advance of \$4,000. I bought out Lance and Dave and we moved their ammo and supplies back out of the shelter. I gave Dick the remaining \$250 and told him I have his remaining thousand early the following month. That left both Dick and Dave with a half share due to their sweat equity and Chris a full share. Since Dick and Dave are single, maybe that was fair.

We paid off Dick on the 5th of the following month. Meanwhile I noticed the excavator working in Lance and Elvia's backyard, digging a large hole.

"Are you going ahead and building your own shelter?"

"Yes, Gary, we are. Elvia wants a full power home standby generator and we're putting in a small shelter."

From time to time, I checked on their progress. They had a concrete block shelter built that contained ~1,000 square feet. They were looking at the natural gas RS20000 from Costco and planned to install it in the shelter with the ATS next to the house's fuse panel. They ordered 10 1-year deluxe LTS food packages from Walton Feed.

"May I ask you a question?"

"Sure, what would you like to know?"

"How are you going to power the generator if we have an earthquake and lose natural gas?"

"The generator is easily converted."

"Fair enough, where's your propane tank."

"Haven't gotten one yet. How big of a tank will I need?"

"About 10,000-gallons for a long term outage and at least 500-gallons for a short term outage. Minimum usage on that generator is ~1.2gph and maximum is ~2.3gph."

"What is it at ½ power?"

"1.8gph. What if you had to stay down here for 2,401 hours?"

"Why that long?"

"If our peak fallout level is around 900R, you'd have to stay there 2,401 hours. There's no way I'd get less than a 3,000-gallon tank. With a desert fill, you'd have 2,700 gallons. At a 50% power level that would give you ~1,500 hours at ½ power and 2,250 hours at ¼ power. Conversely, a 5,000-gallon tank filled to 4,500-gallons will run 2,500 hours at ½ power. You can rent a certified tank from AmeriGas, but I don't know if you can put a 5,000-gallon tank in a residential area. Will that concrete block construction withstand an earthquake, we're only 3½ miles from the fault?"

"Then you'd put in a 5,000-gallon tank?"

"That or bigger."

"Why?"

"If you have to stay in a shelter for 100 days, so will the repair people. I'd be inclined to give them the same amount of time to try and restore power and natural gas. If we have an earthquake, we won't have water and sewer for some time; do you have a water tank and a waste tank? Do you have an air filtration system with blast valves? Do you have a survey meter, dosimeters and KIO₃?"

"Uh-oh."

"If I were going to replace my generator with a Residential Standby, I'd buy a diesel."

"Any particular brand?"

"Cummins or Kohler. Anything that would give you 100 amps of 240v prime power. I've spent 3 years or more studying the subject and I still need to get it right. If you don't want full residential standby, you could go with a diesel portable."

"How many amps does your genset put out?"

"About 59-60, I can't remember. I know it puts out 30 amps of 240. Just enough to get by, Lance."

"Thanks for the information."

o

I don't care how prepared you are, you're never ready when TSHTF. Because we were squared away financially, I gave some thought to getting the extra PT1911 and the second shotgun. She took me to Sandy's and I bought my second shotgun. Next we called Derek and told him the check was in the mail for the second PT1911. Finally, we went to White's and got another pistol belt, holster and 3 magazine pouches.

I inquired about the M82A1 rifle and the imported ammo. He told me that he might be able to get 1,200 rounds, but I better plan on sending him \$6 grand for the ammo alone. I told him that I'd think about it. Match grade .50BMG can go for \$5 a round. I'm sure that the Mk 211 MP cost the government a lot more than the \$6 grand he wanted. I discussed this with the boss and she said go ahead; Ron had mentioned that High Desert had a single shot bolt action .50BMG rifle. I knew that but had my heart set on a Tac-50. It wouldn't be the first time I got the cart ahead of the horse. I called him back and said I'd mail a check for \$6,000.

The ammo came in a 3 cartons each holding 5 cans about 10 days later. Along with a note: "Whatever you do, don't get caught with this ammo, it can be traced."

Come Christmas, Sharon handed me 3 boxes. I opened all 3 and realized it was a Tac-50 with a total of 10 magazines. There were instructions showing me how to assemble the rifle. That had me 90% of the way there, I still needed a scope that was tuned to the Raufoss. The next box held the Night Force NXS 12-42x56mm Mil Dot scope, the McCann Night Vision Rail Mount, the Maintenance Kits and the Otis field cleaning kit. The final box held the Jet Titanium .50BMG suppressor.

Sharon is a professional shopper and I occasionally kid her about being Jewish. She can squeeze a nickel so hard, she'll get 10¢ in change. I don't know how she did it, but by January, my package was put up on a shelf. Meanwhile, I shopped around for some match grade .50BMG ammo that would duplicate the Mk 211. I only bought 50 rounds of 750gr Hornady A-MAX Match, it's expensive. I got kidded a lot about the rifle, mostly by Ronald. It can weigh up to 35# including the loaded magazine and the riflescope. Ron did agree to be my spotter, provided I supplied the spotting scope. I still needed night vision.

Once we were fully stocked on food, it was a simple matter to replace what we used. The same applied to our meds, once we were fully stocked. I can assure you that it greatly improved our diet because we had to use the food on the shelves and rotate them. We still had a small amount of freezer room allowing her to watch for sales, which are why my mother, may she rest in peace, shopped that way. About the only thing we

had to rotate out was the yeast, she wouldn't bake bread as long as she could buy it in the store. She searched until she had a recipe for bread using additional gluten.

On my 65th birthday she produced 1,200 rounds of Hornady A-MAX, 6 cases.

Lance and Elvia had a shelter warming and I learned that they'd skipped buying the gaseous fueled generator for a diesel unit. He had about the same equipment that we did a 1,000-gallon waste water tank, 5,000-gallon water tank and a 5,000-gallon diesel tank. He took my advice and installed an AV-150 with an electric motor to run it and had 2 extra filters and a regular $\frac{3}{4}$ bath. Overall, his shelter was slightly larger than ours, 1,000ft² vs. ~800ft². They could sleep 16 to our 24. He explained that he doubted we wouldn't have any notice of an attack and they had space for themselves, Joseph and Erica and their families and Elvia's parents.

He asked about the AR and I told him it came from Guam and the paper trail ended when Andy died. He said he had a friend in Glendale, AZ who had offered to get him all the AR-15s he wanted. I asked if he had extra handguns and he said no, he was torn between buying more .357 magnum revolvers or the High Capacity SA .45s. He felt that one was as reliable as the other, but the .45s were less expensive than his .357 magnum.

Then the topic of conversation turned to the troop pullback and the problems we were experiencing in Iraq, and other things. He'd paid \$2.80 a gallon for the bulk #2 diesel fuel and wanted to know where I got the PRI-D. I told him Battery Stuff dot com in Rogue River, Oregon. Next, we got to discussing heirloom seeds and I suggested The Ark Institute and their package of 40 kinds of seeds for around \$80. I was being pumped for information and knew it. Lance asked about the survey meters and I told him about Radmeters4U.

He could get KIO₃ from either Medical Corps or the Shane Conner, but Medical Corps was cheaper. As far as the Prussian Blue, Medical Corps was still looking for a source of good raw materials and FDA approval. However, the KIO₃ was probably more important. I suggested buying The Package, plus extra dosimeters and one CD V-717. Other topics included a supply of prescription drugs, medical equipment, and medical supplies. I told him what I knew about each item as we went through it. He was familiar with the Mk 1 kits and the M8 & M9 detection paper. I told him that Shane sold both the M8 & M9 paper but I didn't know where he could get the Mk 1 kits.

For antibiotics, I recommended Cipro generic and Keflex. If his doctor would write the Rx, he could get Ringer's, D5W and/or normal saline plus IV sets. Art-Cel was a good blood stopper, it was a special gauze pad, and ran about \$40 a pair for 4x4s. It was similar to the QuikClot ACS. Sharon used hemostats in her quilting, buying them by the box. I don't know which type of hemostats they were, there are several kinds, but she got me a box each of the two styles she used.

We had a huge assortment of dressings, accumulated over a period of years. There were 9-10 triangular bandages, Band-Aids, alcohol, and tons of other stuff, some it I bought in Salt Lake City. We had both Neosporin crème and ointment. There must have been about a dozen different kinds of crèmes for sore muscles, but I stuck with my Icy Hot.

About the only thing I knew about making diagnosis were related to the degree of fever, high *generally* meant bacteria and low generally meant virus. Antibiotics seem to be useless against a virus. Bleeding wasn't good, but neither were tourniquets. The best bet seemed to be to stop the bleeding with a coagulant, like those Art-Cell gauze pads, unless you were dealing with a severed limb. Broken bones required immobilization so the doctor could properly set it. Oh, and don't give pain killers in the case of a head injury.

o

"That's it?"

"Yeah, see if you can pick it up."

"Damn, that's heavy."

"So are the other 90 rounds of ammo."

"It illegal, right?"

"Oh yeah, and so is the ammo. I'll have to keep a low profile or the BATFE will come looking and we'll end up with another Ruby Ridge or Waco."

"If that's the case, you might just as well get suppressors; they can only lock you up once."

"Sure, should I try Wal-Mart or Target?"

"I'm sure they're available somewhere."

"No doubt, but I try to avoid those neighborhoods. A very good one, like a Surefire, would probably cost several thousand dollars."

"They make them down in LA, don't they?"

"Surefire is located in Fountain Valley."

"We go right by there when we go down to see her father."

"Ok, we need 4 for the M1As and 1 for the AR. Get some of those neat LED flashlights while you're at it."

He dropped that subject like a hot rock. They probably had very high security and we had no idea where they stored the completed units. They probably had them under lock and key in a locked building with armed guards. Would I take one if it were offered? Do bears poop in the woods? I'd also take an M-203 and grenades, if offered, or a few cases of LAW rockets. The same goes for a Ma Deuce or a M240B. It goes double for M67s.

o

After Lance and I had both completed the shelters, my next door neighbor, the one I gave the \$100 to, came around and asked what we did to the backyard.

"Not much, we buried a couple of pieces of culvert and a small fuel tank. I have a small portable generator and the tank has the extra fuel. If we have a long term power outage, I might see my way clear to letting you run an extension cord for your refrigerator."

"What did the guy across the street do?"

"They put in standby power and a fuel tank. It's all wired into their house with an automatic transfer switch. It might be a good idea if you picked up a portable generator and a few cans of gas, if it gets hot this summer, we could get rolling blackouts again. Anyway, I appreciate you letting them cut through your backyard to remove the extra dirt."

She lost interest somewhere in the middle of the conversation, I think she was just being nosy. I told her the truth, I just didn't tell her all of the truth. The reason telling the truth is better than lying is that you don't have to remember which lie you told to whom. I wasn't on a witness stand so I didn't have to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, especially not the whole truth. Besides, Missy speaks more English than she did.

Back to the political scene, Bush didn't have a choice after the SCOTUS ruled and we began pulling troops out with the first to come home being the ones who had been extended. We basically advanced in reverse, backing out the way we came in. Any military equipment we couldn't move was destroyed in place, mostly military infrastructure. Hezbollah continued to needle Israel but they didn't launch a full out attack. Syria continued their military buildup on Israel's border. Russia launched two new SSBNs and China launched 3 ships. We were still playing a balancing act with the Saudis to keep the oil flowing. They were able to pick up most of the oil Venezuela cut off, but not all.

In Kalifornia, the price of gas edged closer and closer to \$3.50 a gallon. In response to a daring drug trafficking attempt, Bush ordered an additional 6,000 National Guardsmen to the Mexican border. Calderón continued the Mexican Army's fight with the drug cartels. Work on the border fence continued.

Hillary and Obama were duking it out for the Democratic nomination and McCain's lead had fallen way off. While Rudi was still in first place, John McCain was closing the gap. I liked him and could easily vote for him. He couldn't be any worse than Ronnie Ray-Gun. After a major battle, Congress had approved funding for the RRW, our new warhead.

o

By the end of October, 2008, I knew I was going to vote Republican, no matter what. Why change now, I'd never, ever, voted for a Democrat for President. Kalifornia voting was a real pain in the butt, but both Sharon and I had registered as permanent absentee voters. I'd mark my ballot and give it to her. She mostly followed my lead, except on issues where we disagreed. We mailed them as early as we could. I voted for John and Sarah.

For Christmas 2008, we bought a Kohler 30REOZJB diesel generator and Ron got me another used propane tank. We enlarged the generator room and added block walls. The ATS was mounted on the house next to the fuse panel. I ordered 1,000-gallons of #2 diesel (\$3,350) and added PRI-D. Every month thereafter, we would add 500-gallons of #2 diesel until the tank was completely full. We were still getting 5 gallons of gas in a can every time she filled up and the gas tank now held about 4,300-gallons.

Amy got a raise and moved to an apartment in Lancaster to be closer to work. Ron and Linda installed a propane fueled Residential Standby Generator from Onan (Costco) and Ron talked his friend at AmeriGas into renting him a 5,000-gallon tank. They filled it, but I half suspect that she had to borrow money from her bank. Linda's Dad had been dying for the past 10 years, but he just hung on, not wanting to go. As far as the generator went, I'd guess they spent about \$16,000 on it and they bought 4,500-gallons of propane at \$2 something a gallon. All I can say is it must be nice... Ron was out of the gun buying business for a year or so until they got caught up.

I assume that Lance's friend bought him those 4 AR-15s he now had. I do know he bought 10,000-rounds of M855 and 100 30-round magazines because he told me. He didn't say what he did on the handgun issue. I never heard another word about the suppressors from Ron, either. As far as my Tac-50 went, it was set to go, but I lacked the courage to take it outside of the house. If I got caught with it, I'd be out, well, you know, a ton of money. Congress was sworn in on January 3, 2009. The Democrats controlled both houses and had increased their majority although they were a few votes short of total control in both the House and the Senate. I disliked Obama and Biden. I hadn't watched TV news for over a year and a half. I got sick of the arguments on the O'Reilly Factor and Shep Smith's antics. The papers and the websites had all the news I could handle.

I ordered more of the KIO_3 and the Prussian Blue, now that it was available. We rotated out the expired meds and replaced them, just in case. I now had 15 bottles of Humalin 70/30, enough for a year at least. With gentle urging, I managed to keep buying 8 car-

tons of Kool's a month, while smoking about 5 cartons. I had them hidden lest Sharon find them and cut me back to 5 cartons.

o

Dirty Harry Callahan used to say, "Go ahead, make my day." To make my day, you'd have to find a way to get me the things I wanted but couldn't get. Think ordnance and firearms accessories, like an AN/PVS-27 or two. The year started out just fine and that lasted right up to noon (EST) on Tuesday, January 20, 2009. During his inaugural address, Obama brought up gun control. I think he had the same speech writer that Michael Douglas used in *The American President*. He talked about getting the guns. I guess one could say that his speech got polite applause.

"Did you listen to his speech?"

"Wasn't that something?"

"What about that stop you promised to make in Fountain Valley?"

"I'll work on it, how many do we need of what size?"

"Five in 5.56mm and five in 7.62mm."

"Who got more AR-15s?"

"Lance got 4."

"Who got another M1A?"

"I want a spare."

"Why?"

"Because I'm giving some thought to buying a 3rd M1A."

"For who?"

"Damon."

"We're talking a lot of money here."

"Hot is cool. I'll go 1 grand apiece for 1 5.56mm and 3 7.62mm with the FA mounts."

"I'm not sure who to ask."

"Ask Kevin, I'm sure he knows somebody who knows somebody."

"He probably does."

"Use the line out of Mission Impossible, *As always, should you or any of your IM force be caught or killed, the Secretary will disavow any knowledge of your actions.*"

Three weeks later, Ron showed up with a grin on his face.

"Well?"

"You owe me \$4,000."

"You're kidding me."

"You owe me \$4,000, \$1,000 per box."

"I mentioned it to Lance and he said he'd go a grand apiece too. Let me get the check-book so I can repay the \$4,000 I owe you."

"Who is going to install them?"

"I bought the flashhider alignment tools, I will. Which attachment devices did you get?"

"The Kalifornia legal variety, the muzzle brake for the M1As. The AR-15s won't make any difference."

"With luck, our sentences will run concurrent. Tell Lance to bring them to me for installation."

That made the cheese binding for a while; I didn't believe he could get them. We were until the new Assault Weapons Ban took effect on 1 July getting caught up. I put up 2 rows of bricks around and lay cardboard over the shelter entrance. We planted marigolds. We had planted a garden for the first time since we were in Davenport, trying to cut costs anyway we could. However, by the time we bought jars and extra lids, we about broke even. I planned on buying the 30 quart canner from Canning Party, but we didn't have the money. Sharon used the stove on the patio, thereby avoiding warming the house. It tended to even out in the long run.

Derek called to tell me he'd made SFC. And that he had the PT1911 and extra magazines. I mentioned that I had some new rifle accessories, improved flashhidiers. He wanted to talk about the new AWB. What did I think?

"Derek, it's positively un-American. They banned magazines with a capacity over 10 rounds, included the M1A rifles in the description of an Assault Weapon and appear to be going to try and ban all semi-auto firearms."

"How does that affect you?"

"I have 1 Tac-50, 3 M1As, 1 AR-15 and 2 PT1911s when you send the second. Even my Nazi .32 is semi-auto."

"No cowboy guns?"

"Not yet, no. I may have to go that route."

"Can you afford that?"

"Not at the moment, no. I've told you about our backyard construction project. It's completed and has an upgraded generator and a full tank of fuel."

"Gas?"

"Diesel. We also have 4,420-gallons of stabilized gasoline, plus whatever is in the gas cans. We planted a garden this year and have been canning. We had to buy jars and lids this year, but next year, we should come out ahead."

"How many jars did you buy?"

"Two gross. Plus that many extra lids."

"Did you ever get a chance to sight in your new rifle?"

"I'm afraid to take it out of the house. We got the scope mounted and laser bore sighted, but that's it. I still have all of the ammo I bought."

You Can Run – Chapter 4

"Did you hear about the test?"

"What test?"

"Iran tested a nuclear weapon."

"The Israelis won't like that."

"It won't be much longer, Dad."

"Was the test successful?"

"Very. It was a plutonium weapon."

"Damn."

"We may come out and see you."

"Do that and bring your brother when you do."

"I've got to go, I have another call, bye Dad, love you."

I tried to call Damon, but his line was busy. I called Ron.

"Did you hear about the test?"

"What test?"

"Iran exploded a nuclear weapon and the test was successful. It might be time for you to give some thought to moving some of your things over here."

"If you're right on this, I'll start this afternoon."

I saw Lance outside and hollered at him. He came over and I asked if he'd heard about the test. He said he had and Elvia was trying to get Erica and her family, Joseph and his family and her parents to come up until things were sorted out.

"Are you totally squared away with your shelter, food, fuel and such?"

"I'm prepared, but I sure hope we don't end up in the shelter."

"That makes two of us. My son told me about the test and said he and his family might come for a visit. If they drove straight through, it would take 24 hours."

"Which son, Iowa or Arkansas?"

"Arkansas. I told him to bring his brother. I tried to call Iowa but his line was busy."

About an hour later, I tried Damon again and got no answer. I tried Derek with the same result, getting his cell phone message center. After that, I broke the news to Sharon. She said she was going to the store and would be back. I should move all of the newly canned goods to the shelter and empty the shelves in the garage. If there was room in the freezer, I was to empty the freezers in the house too.

She called Patti and they left together in Patti's SUV. I was just finishing up moving everything when they came back. We were evacuating the last group of people from Afghanistan, we still had 4 CSGs in the Gulf of Oman and the Threat Level had been raised to Red. The reporter also said we'd raised the worldwide alert level to DEFCON 3. They put everything they bought in the shelter, the blast door was now completely uncovered.

Chris came home early and Dave wasn't far behind him. Less than 30 minutes later, Dick showed up. Ron pulled up and we began to unload his weapons and ammo plus the food he'd brought. He said Linda would be there in a few minutes with the more of the food. By now, I was beyond totally exhausted and I think my blood sugar was low. I grabbed a coke and my meds and headed for the shelter. I suggested that Sharon should bring anything else she thought we needed because I had to rest for a while.

Amy showed up with her kids and sent them down to be with Grandpa. She helped Sharon move more stuff to the shelter. When they were done, we all returned topside to watch TV. Sharon had started supper upstairs. Just before we sat down to eat, David, Lorrie and 3 of their kids showed up. Sharon had made goulash, there was more than enough to go around. It was Wednesday night and I was looking forward to watching Jericho. Jerusalem is 10 hours ahead of us.

Around 8pm, the phone rang and it was Derek. They were on their way and so was Damon. He said they were about 18 hours out and Damon left Britt when they left Flip-pin. I speculated Damon was about 21 hours out and he agreed. He cut me off; they had filled up and were ready to leave.

We had a house full, all of Ron's family was there and we had 8 of our children, spouses or grandchildren. Ron and I finished up and went to the office for a smoke. I realized that I still had to move my computer with its precious store of information. We could use Sharon's monitor, I was still using the 21" CRT. Ron got John and I got David and they move all of the computers to the shelter except for my monitor. They also moved my stack of DVDs and the stuff I had in my cabinet.

It began to get late and we had no indication that anything was happening anywhere in the world. We had 4 TVs going and were watching both entertainment shows and news

channels. Brenda and Amy started talking about returning to Lancaster. I got everyone's attention and said:

"Your best time here from Lancaster would be 20 minutes. We don't know what's going to happen and may not know until it actually does. I won't insist, but I'd strongly suggest you consider spending the night in the shelter. As far as the Brown's, it's up to you if you want to go back to Ron and Linda's. I'm so wound up, I couldn't sleep with a handful of Xanax and Benadryl. I plan to stay in my office and watch the news."

There was some discussion, after. More accurately arguments but let's be nice here. Ron and I returned to the office for another cigarette and he asked my opinion of what would happen.

"Partner, those Israelis have been making practice flights in F-16s to Gibraltar for some time. That's practice for them bombing all of the Iranian nuclear facilities. With the Russians selling those improved SAMs to Iran, I figure Israel might go nuclear. What I don't know is if they'll use missiles or aircraft."

"Does it matter?"

"Probably not. I have no idea what Indian or Pakistan will do if Israel goes nuclear. I rather suspect that Russia won't like it because the Iranians owe them money on that reactor and the fuel. Who can say what the Chinese will do, it could be a good time to attack Taiwan now that the Olympics are over. Derek and Damon wouldn't be coming here if the news was good."

"I don't like it, but I can't fault your thinking. What about the animals? You'd better go get them and we'll let them run in the connecting culvert. We can put down a sheet of OSB and a blanket for them to sleep on. You'd better remember to bring all of your pet food."

"John and I will go after them. I'll tell everyone else to spend the night in the shelter. You'd better touch bases with Lance, Chris, Dick and Dave. If your boys get here in time, they'll use 8 or 9 bunks, right?"

"For sure 8. We need 5 plus 5 plus 8 or 18 bunks. You need 8 making 26. We're going to need 2 folding cots."

"Could we double up the smaller kids? The baby has a crib."

"We'll make it work but I forgot Chris and Patti, we're still going to need 3 cots. I have 6 so we're ok unless we end up with more people. I believe Lance has 2 empty spots, which would take care of Dick and Dave."

"Where did you find cots?"

"Sharon saw them at a garage sale, \$5 each. We have 8 services of 4 in the Melamine, in case something got broke. Ditto on the flatware. It's going to be crowded, but we just have to get by. The carrying capacity of the AV-150 is 50 people, air wouldn't be a problem, especially if we let it run 24/7."

"What about your garden?"

"We'll lose one picking of green beans and the potatoes are covered by soil. We're not going to know until afterwards."

"Get your Red Hot Potatoes here! Every one guaranteed to glow in the dark!"

o

We hadn't dug potatoes yet. Next Monday was Labor Day 9/7/09. It was the tail end of the green beans, maybe we'd lose 7 quarts. If we had time, we'd pick them and have fresh green beans for supper tomorrow night. We rarely had this many visitors and all the cars attracted attention. While Ron and John went after their cats and dogs, I made the rounds talking to Chris, Dick, Dave and finally Lance. He agreed to take Dick and Dave. Amy and Sharon rounded up the cats and put them in the shelter. The small dogs were easy, Baby was nearly impossible, they lowered her on a rope, and she moaned all the way down.

They put down 2 sheets of OSB, one for Ron and Linda's 3 dogs and one for our 4 dogs. The cats found hiding places. They added sections of OSB placed on edge and cut to fit to keep the dogs in their temporary cages. Eventually, everyone except me turned in. Early morning media isn't very good in normal times. Tonight, a very bleary eyed Brit Hume was on the Fox Channel, Nancy Grace was covering for CNN and MSNBC had Rita Cosby. If Glenn Beck was smart, he'd hopped a plane to Utah.

Around Oh dark thirty, the EAS messaged appeared. Bush announced that Israel had nuked Iran. He was raising the DEFCON to 2. We had ongoing talks with Beijing and Moscow. Stay tuned for further announcements. I got another cuppa, I was finally starting to get sleepy even though I hadn't taken my sleeping meds.

"Wake up Dad."

"Huh?"

"You want a hot cup of coffee?"

"I must have dozed off. Sometime early this morning Bush was on TV and confirmed that Israel nuked Iran and he moved us to DEFCON 2."

"Derek called from New Mexico. Damon called from Salt Lake. They both said they were about 12 hours out."

"I didn't even hear the phone ring. Ron's in charge, I have to get some sleep."

My bunk was in the last rank of bunks on the left. I had an upper. I crawled in, pulled up the covers and was gone. A few hours later, Amy woke me again. Damon and Derek had met up in Barstow and were about 75 minutes out. We were still at DEFCON 2. I grabbed some clean clothes and went to the house to get a shower. I treated myself to a shower in the master bedroom shower, I hated taking showers in the bathtub. I slipped into one of those one piece jump suits that Sharon had bought me somewhere. I ate a bowl of Special K and had some coffee. Finally, I went to the office for a smoke.

"Afternoon."

"What's happening?"

"Nothing. Speculation is rampant and several large cities are attempting to evacuate. It's mostly gridlock out there. Who's that?"

I looked out the window and it was my boys and their families. It sure hadn't taken them the 24-26 hours I expected. I've driven non-stop from Palmdale to Charles City and I made it in 23 hours, not counting the time zone changes. The kids looked tired. Derek was wearing ACUs and had a pin with 5 subdued stripes. When he came home from Iraq, he was an E-5. Shortly after joining the Arkansas National Guard, he'd made E-6 and now E-7.

"You look tired."

"I am tired. I left my cell phone off until we got to Albuquerque. We had been called up but since they couldn't reach me, all they could do was leave a message. Where can we put the kids?"

"Put them in Amy's room. How much stuff do you have, can we unload it for you?"

"Some suitcases, the rifle and an AWOL bag of ammo. Your pistol and magazines are in the AWOL bag."

"Go down to the shelter and pick any unused bunk. Get some sleep, we'll talk later."

I would have expected it to have gone down by now. However, it was more like the Cuban Missile Crisis, the initial reaction followed by a lot of talk. In the Middle East, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria had attacked Israel in response to their attack on Iran. One reporter suggested that some of those attackers could be Iraqis. So far, there was no news from either India or Pakistan. Kim Jong Il was MIA. South Korea was on full alert, ready to attack the north. We were trying to pull our troops out, leaving behind any equipment, intact. The Saudis hadn't reacted to Israel's action. The UN Security Council was in an

emergency session. I don't know why they bothered. It was more like the Useless Nations Organization.

o

Chris, Dick and Dave had gone to work and Ron and Linda had gone back home. Apparently Brenda's husband, Cody, had to go to work and John had to work that night. I left the TV on, but muted the volume, this crap could go on for days and speculating about it probably wouldn't change the outcome. About the only thing a person could hope for was more than 30 minutes warning. Late in the day, the discussion turned to the stalled talks over Taiwan. Taiwan was threatening to declare independence. Many thought that would come back in 2008 during the Olympics. Russia had said that it was prepared to back the enemies of Israel and we took Israel's side, as usual.

On the upside, all of the military had been out of Iraq and Afghanistan by the time Obama was sworn in. We should have pulled out of Korea too, in retrospect. They were still talking about a North American Union, but the talks weren't getting anywhere, thank God.

Although, I'd have preferred it if no one were more than 20 minutes out, it didn't work out that way. Derek said they could only stay a maximum of 10 days. Damon could stay a bit longer. I gave Derek the M1A I intended him to have and Damon went with a shotgun. Mary couldn't be left out and got the AR-15. Mary kept her 9mm pistol and Derek got the second .45. Damon didn't get a handgun. I called Sandy and she had another PT1911 'available'. Derek drove me down to buy it. I bought 5 extra 8 round magazines. We ran by White's and got another pistol belt holster and 3 magazine pouches. We took the big rifle out in the middle of nowhere and Derek sighted it in. He also sighted in the M1A I gave him and my spare.

The next day, I got a strange phone call. They said my pistol was ready to pick up. That didn't compute, Kalifornia had a 15 day waiting period on ALL firearms. When we got there, she pulled out the paperwork and I noticed it was already dated, about 14 days hence. I signed and she said, "We're closing up until the trouble is over, need anything else?"

"5 boxes of 150gr .30-30 and 2 boxes of 9mm JHP."

She set it on the counter, rang it up, I paid and she locked the door behind us. I looked back and they were busy pulling the firearms off the racks.

"You must be a good customer."

"Who me? Ron buys a lot more from her than I do and Gunny Ermey takes delivery of all of his firearms through her. He mentioned the store on a show or in an appearance, I can't remember. And no, I don't know where he lives other than in Palmdale."

"Is someone staying up at night and keeping an eye on TV?"

"I did last night, want to join me?"

"Sure, I need to clean the rifles and we can get caught up."

o

I gave Damon his new gun and told him to try and avoid shooting himself. I hated the new phone Sharon had bought me, it was hard to program. I had to work hard to figure it out, but the top button was Amy, the second Lorrie, the third Damon, the fourth Derek, the fifth Ron, the sixth Clarence, the seventh Patti, the eighth Dick, the ninth Dave and the tenth Lance. I still had 6 empty buttons. Our phone signal for WW III wasn't even inspired, it was simply *DEFCON One*. By midnight, we had all of the guns cleaned and standing in a corner. I had the TV on, muted, and we were talking about Iraq. Derek was rather angry about Congress forcing Bush to pull out. I wasn't but I didn't say anything. Around 2am, The EAS message flashed again, followed by DEFCON 1, no doubt an error. Derek scurried to get the arms to the shelter and wake everyone sleeping upstairs up. I noted the time, disaster #1 was beginning.

I didn't bother to turn on the volume, it was closed captions and I could read it. By the time he'd finished taking, I had called everyone on my list including Clarence. I told him we were at DEFCON 1 and if Shirley and he needed a shelter to come here immediately. Next, I unplugged everything from the outlets except the refrigerators and freezer. I grabbed a few things and made sure the house was empty before going out and standing by the shelter blast door. Before everyone arrived, the night sky lit to the northeast and several times to the southwest. It even lit to the southeast, once. I noted the time.

David and Lorrie were the last to arrive. I climbed down, carefully, and sent Derek back up to padlock the hatch from the inside. The children and about half of the adults went back to sleep, they must be used to having world wars. There was no TV signal and I couldn't pick up anything on the portable radio. The northeast flash had to be Edwards, the southeast, San Bernardino and the southwest, Greater LA. To quote, *We're surrounded, that simplifies our problem*. Every Marine knows that one; so should you.

I dug out the CD V-717, inserted fresh batteries and hooked it to the cable. I also did the same with the CD V-715 to measure the inside radiation. I left all of the radios, except for the portable inside the grounded cabinet. The lights flickered out, turning on the emergency light. I heard the generator starting and not long after the lights were back on. I noted the time, 34 minutes since the DEFCON Warning.

"What are you writing?"

"I'm writing down the times that everything happened. We got the DEFCON warning around 2, the first weapon flash was 18 minutes later. We lost power 34 minutes after the warning. Derek and I have the watch; the rest of you might as well turn in."

"Are there enough bunks?"

"We have 6 cots, but with some of us staying up, there are enough bunks."

"Thanks for calling Gar-ree."

"I had you programmed in, so I figured I'd better warn you."

"This your shelter?"

"Mostly belongs to Ron and me. Some others have a share in it."

"The filter is installed in the air machine, Dad."

"Everyone can quit holding their breath now," I announced.

"Yeah right, butthead."

"Be nice."

"I don't know how."

"I didn't think so. You better wait until you know how long we'll be down here before you start bellyaching. If we get 150R, we'll be out in 3 weeks. If we get 600R, it will be 8 weeks. If we get 3,000R, it will be close to 8 months."

"Sez who?"

"My computer."

"Ain't no computer been made that can keep me down here if I want to leave."

"True, do you have a key?"

"What key?"

"To the padlock Derek put on the blast cover." (It was a combination lock.)

"You locked us in?"

"I locked them out."

"Gimme the key."

"I don't have the key."

"Don't look at me," Derek added.

"Where is the key?"

"The last time I saw it was on my dresser in the bedroom."

"You're chitting me."

"Yes I am, be nice and maybe I'll remember the combination."

"Gar-ree, you're not being very nice."

"Clarence, it's a number I can't forget. I just wanted to see his face get red. I made up a spreadsheet that calculates, with some accuracy, when the radiation level will fall to below 104mR/hr, the maximum safe exposure. It's based on the peak radiation level but my survey meters only go up to 500R. We shouldn't get that much radiation, they only get 3,000R at ground zero. I saw flashes at Edwards, San Bernardino and several near LA. My weather station also shows wind speed and direction so we should know if we'll get much fallout. I'm logging that every 15 minutes too."

"How do you plan on keeping in touch with Lance?"

"He has a CM300 programmed to the same channels as mine is. I haven't connected the radio and won't until I'm sure they're done hitting us. They might attack in waves."

o

Derek took over the radio table where all of the equipment was located and began noting times and readings. We move to the far end of the north tube where the dayroom was located so we could talk without waking anyone up. As quickly as the Bunn coffee maker warmed up, we were making more coffee and pouring it in a large coffee urn. It wasn't that we had so much to talk about as it was that we just needed to talk. This was our first WW III, outside of my fiction. Ron had come around a long time ago, believing it wasn't if, just when and what. Clarence was more of the maybe, maybe not crowd. Chris, Dick and Dave thought I was certifiable, with Chris being my harshest critic.

Lance must have had some degree of belief, they built a shelter. I don't believe Lance thought they'd ever have to use it, but looked at it with the attitude, which is better: having a shelter and not needing it or needing it and not having it? The answer to the question can be, quite literally, a matter of life or death. Before I bought my first M1A in the fall of 2006, he didn't have any rifles. He bought a very good used Loaded in a private sale that included a large number of magazines and 4 1,260-round cases of SA surplus. He later got those 4 ARs from a friend in Glendale, AZ.

I bought 3 additional spring sets from Fulton Armory, a ruptured case extractor and the flashhider aligning rod. When I got those 5 M1A magazines from Ron, I ended up with 20 magazines for each M1A. Because I had 22 of the M-16 magazines, I traded him 5 for 5, getting him up to 10 magazines for the SU-16

It was about 3 hours later that the CD V-717 began to lift off zero. It took another 3-4 hours before we needed to change the radioactivity range. Both the V-715 and the V-717 have 4 ranges, 0-0.5, 0-5, 0-50 and 0-500. All measurements are in Rads. Left running full time, they have a battery life of ~150 hours. I also wanted Very High Range meter, but they were civilian and new, not used. New meant I couldn't afford it. I hadn't bought a Geiger counter, the CD V-700.

We were trying to decide whether the stuff had HTF. How does a person measure such a thing? We were secure in a bunker with a generator providing power. Even if we ran out of diesel fuel, there was the smaller PowerBOSS generator and over 4,000-gallons of gasoline. People were locked out of the bunker, or Ron was locked in, depending on your view. If the water pressure dropped, a sensor automatically shut the valve connecting the tank to the city water supply. We weren't using anything to heat the shelter, the number of people provided more than enough and the generator also gave off heat. If we got trapped in the bunker, there was an emergency exit we could tunnel out of.

How did we know it wasn't normal? No radio, no TV and no internet for a start. Beyond that, the CD V-717 had a reading, small, but climbing. Unless the government owns the power company, like LA's DWP, power came from civilian companies and they couldn't get rich if they didn't have power to sell. Things weren't normal because most everyone was in the shelter willingly, putting their lives on hold. We now knew what and when, although the knowledge wasn't comforting.

Palmdale had a population of ~250,000 and the Antelope Valley close to ½ million. They probably wasn't enough public shelter available to handle more than 10 or 15 thousand. Why not? Hell, they couldn't pay for decent schools or all the Medi-Cal costs or the costs of keeping the roads up. Kalifornia tried to be so politically correct, it was nearly impossible to breathe. All that oil off the coast they couldn't harvest because of the environmentalists resulted in the highest gas prices in the nation.

Did it ever occur to the other side, ergo, Russia, China or whomever, that they'd be doing us a favor by nuking NY, Washington and LA? Only 2 countries, not on our side had missiles capable of reaching the mainland US, Russia and China. Well, Israel's Jericho III could reach the US, but they were on our side. Since the war in Iraq had started, both countries pushed hard to establish or reestablish their military. They were paying for it with European and US money; Russia supplied petroleum products to Europe and China's best customer was Wal-Mart, followed by Target and K-Mart. Even Venezuela, until recently, was building its military using US money.

I'm telling you, the more things changed, the more they stayed the same, or got worse. The whole world knew that Israel was a member of the nuclear club, but they never ad-

mitted it. Not until 2007 when Olmert made a slip of a tongue that almost confirmed it. How much of what the Iranian crackpot said was true and how much was bluster? He got sat on a couple of times by the Ayatollahs and still couldn't keep his mouth shut. He was a good buddy of Hugo Chavez, another crackpot.

The trouble was all there waiting to explode into something horrific, we could run, but we couldn't hide. Hmm, I wonder if Chris still thinks I'm crazy? He'd better keep that to himself; the combination is 4845. That's enough excitement for one day and I'm coffee'd out, time to hit the rack.

You Can Run – Chapter 5

When we started out, I had 3 drums, two full of Castrol 10w-30 and the other empty, to put the dirty oil in. I had 48 oil filters, the oil needs changed once every 100 hours. With a filter, it took 9 quarts of oil for every change. If my math was right, I could change the oil 48 times. The PowerBOSS used a little over 1 quart and had no replaceable filter. I had 3 cases of oil for it, giving me plenty of oil changes.

The radiation peaked at ~425R and my spreadsheet said more than 46 days but less than 56 days, round numbers, between 7-8 weeks. At 82 days we'd be close of 50mR. After the radiation peaked, we pulled out the radios and hooked them up. We checked with Lance and everything was fine in their shelter. (Frustrated, Insecure, Neurotic and Emotional) Just like things were fine in ours. The animals were less than ecstatic about being confined in a hole in the ground. While I was referring to the pets, I suppose you could include Ron, if you so choose.

On one AM frequency, we found a message that must have been a looped tape. It kept repeating: "Air Defense Emergency, incoming missiles detected, seek shelter immediately." There were a few faint signals on the ham bands, but nothing we could make out. There was some guy on CB channel nine, who kept repeating: "Mayday, mayday, mayday." He didn't pause long enough to allow anyone to answer so I didn't. He was probably a member of the informal CB Club that mostly talked on Hwy. 14, on their way to and from work. He couldn't keep it up for long, his battery would die or he would. That told me that there probably hadn't been an EMP pre-strike. We stood a good chance of getting our vehicles to start.

Derek pigeonholed me and began to inquire what I had in the way of preps. I told him to look around. Then, he got specific, what about radiation suits and gas masks? I told him Ron and I each had a Millennium gas mask and a Tyvek suit. We had 13 CD V-742 dosimeters, a charger, and more than enough KIO₃ and KI to go around. Sharon and I had about 7-8 months of food for up to 6 people. Ron and Linda probably had the same amount although they hadn't brought all of their food over. Patti had shopped with Sharon and had a lot, but I didn't know how much. Clarence and Shirley only brought his firearms and one suitcase, so probably didn't have much food.

I went on to tell him that Lance had 10 1-year deluxe food supplies from Walton Feed plus all of their regular food. Our food inventory was almost current and didn't include what Sharon and Patti had bought on that last shopping trip. We had grown a garden this past year and have more seeds from the Ark Institute.

Then he wanted to know more about those flashes of light. I told him that they were too bright to look at. I'd seen one towards Edwards, one towards San Bernardino and 4 or 5 in the direction of LA. Which was it, 4 or 5, he wanted to know. What difference did it make, I asked? Probably one at the harbors, one downtown, one in the valley and one near LAX. He pointed out that there were several airports in LA and I said yes, 5.

"What difference does it make; you weren't planning on flying home were you?"

"It might have a bearing on relief supplies, Dad."

"I'm sure there are airports they can land at, Derek. Where will these relief supplies be coming from, FEMA? Great Britain? France? Why would LA have any higher priority than any other city in the country? If the government tries to get the National Guard to turn out, you don't believe more than 50% of the people will be available, do you? You're a SFC in the Arkansas National Guard with how many men in your command?"

"Are you saying that we shouldn't have come?"

"Quite the contrary, I'm just pointing out that if you were back home, you'd be really short on people. We need you here, only Lance and you have any military experience. Think about this housing tract, it was originally a walled in community with open spaces on all 4 sides. We still have the north side and the west side open. There are houses south of us and that restaurant to the east of us plus they're building across Avenue R. How many people are there in their homes dying of radiation sickness? I mean, by the time they got up, the radiation was almost here. You can't see it, you can't smell it and you don't feel it. The only way they'd have to know something happened was the lack of lights, TV, radio and internet. If they took off and headed to LA, I doubt they'd have been allowed on the freeway."

"And, they'd have panicked, hurried home to get their families, and tried to find a shelter, huh?"

"Or tried to bug out. Any way they could have gone probably would have put them in the path of fallout. What if they didn't have enough gas? They could have gone out of the frying pan into the fire. If I wasn't a crackpot, we'd all be in the same boat."

"Everybody had to know this could happen, Dad."

"Maybe, but I'll bet most of them didn't believe it would happen. If we'd have had room for 3 culverts, I doubt Lance would have built his own shelter. We could have put up 48 people in that case and still have gotten by with the single air filter. It would have been crowded, 48 people in 1,200ft² of floor space, about 25ft² per person. We wouldn't have had that many people, of course, but you get the idea."

"Why wouldn't you have had 48 people?"

"Only the six families had a share. That doesn't count Clarence and Shirley, but they only added two people. Anyway, the name of the movie wasn't *The Two Amigos*."

"What about when we get out of here?"

"If you want to go home, we'll try and find some more gas cans and I can provide fuel. I'm not so sure you can get there from here. I-40 runs through several large cities, Albuquerque and Amarillo to just name two."

"There's Barstow, Needles, Kingman, Flagstaff, Gallup, Albuquerque, Santa Rosa, Tucumcari, Amarillo, Oklahoma City, Fort Smith and Little Rock."

"I forgot about Oklahoma City and Little Rock; they'd probably have been nuked too. Say, speaking of Barstow, what's the chance of you being able to get an emergency re-supply, if you were in uniform?"

"Probably slim and none, but there is Ft. Irwin. The problem with that is, I'm not under orders and would probably get drafted."

"Both you and Mary know Fort Irwin, right?"

"Yes, that's where I met her."

"When you were at Fort Irwin, you worked supply, right?"

"Yes, so what?"

"You're familiar with the paperwork, right?"

"Was."

"In a TSHTF scenario, what are the odds of units needing supplies and lacking the proper forms?"

"It's possible, I suppose."

"Chew on that for a while."

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"Are we really locked in?"

"Yes, but both Derek and I know the combination. It's no secret, I'll tell you if you want. The idea was to keep others out, we're over capacity as it is."

"We won't run out of air will we?"

"Nothing like that Ron, the unit supplies 50 people. I was thinking in terms of bed space. We're doing some hot bunking is all."

Ron knew all of these things, I'd told him several times about the capacity of the AV-150. Maybe he was pulling my chain just to keep the conversation flowing. I still think we should have had a practice session. Maybe this will be good practice for the next two. If there's anything good about WW III, it must be that all the remaining disasters must be natural disasters. The conclusion is inescapable, unless those UFOs were real. I studied those too: Roswell, Kecksburg, alien abductions, tinfoil that went back to the shape it was before you crushed it, Hanger 18, Area 51 and the USAF Rendlesham Forest Incident in England. Sorry, I couldn't reach any conclusions from reading about the incidents. By the time Project Blue Book ended, it had collected 12,618 UFO reports; and, 701 of the reports – about six percent – were classified as unknown.

Maybe one of the reasons I had a copy of *The Day the Earth Stood Still* was the warning the world got at the end of the movie: If we kept messing around with nuclear weapons and added space flight to the mix, they'd send the guy in the tin suit, Gort, back to blow us up. Nah... it had to be the Russians or Chinese, there was the radio message: *Air Defense Emergency, incoming missiles detected, seek shelter immediately.*

I think they gave up on Civil Defense when they realized that it would be impossible to protect people in a large city. Even if they had a shelter on every block, they couldn't get everyone in and protected in the time it took a missile to fly from there to here. That sounds good, but what really happened was they replaced Civil Defense with FEMA. I doubt any additional explanation is necessary, not after Katrina.

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We had a lot of 'stuff'. Not one of us, so far as I knew, had pre-'65 coins, gold, silver or precious metals. I didn't believe that anyone would trade off food or fuel for metal coins, no matter how valuable they might be. We had enough extra things that we might have what could be called trade goods. We could grow food in our backyard using the seeds we had. You let a couple of tomatoes ripen on the vine and when they start to spoil, you harvest the seed for next year's crop. You could do the same thing with all of the vegetables; let them go to seed and harvest enough for next year.

I was also asked why I had a fixation on WW III. Here goes, I hope it makes sense. What can anyone do to our country? Two things come to mind, terrorist attacks and a nuclear war. While it's not impossible to keep terrorists out, we've done much better since 9/11. DHI claims to have prevented numerous attacks. I don't know if that's true or propaganda to justify their existence. Apparently they have prevented some. Nuclear war has been hanging over our heads for most of my lifetime, ever since the Russians exploded their first bomb. We probably helped the British and French to develop their weapons, just as Russia helped the Chinese, either directly or indirectly. The Cold War began when Winston Churchill said, *an Iron Curtain has...* you know the quote.

Russia apparently built the most, with us second. Their bombs were bigger and ours were better. When they launched Sputnik, it set off the missile race. We had ABMs for a

while; I think the Nike Zeus was one of the last. They had the Nike X with a nuclear warhead, later named Sentinel, but it was taken out of service by the ABM Treaty.

Thinking back, George W. said we had to go into Iraq because of their WMDs. Man, did he pay for that one. No one disputes that Saddam used chemical weapons on the Kurds, but when we got there, we couldn't find them, making George W. a liar. Or so it appeared. During 2007, the insurgents began using Chlorine gas, a Schedule III Chemical Weapon, ergo, a WMD. I can't remember anyone telling George W. they were sorry they doubted him. I also wonder if Obama is still happy he won the election.

It's boring sitting down here in this culvert. We had 2 TVs, one for the kids and one for the adults. The kids started fighting over what to watch and it became easier to let them use both TVs. We broke up into groups, according to interests and each group took a table while some of us had to work. Work, yes, but it wouldn't give you a hernia, someone had to monitor the survey meters and the radios. Periodically, Chris fired up the PowerBOSS and serviced the Kohler, making sure we had electricity. Ron and Clarence were talking to Damon, probably trying to find out more about me.

It was set up now that a person worked 8 on and 8 off, never having the same shift twice in a row. I don't know how it happened, but Derek and I were rotating shifts and except for Chris, only the ladies were working, doing the cooking. They were taking turns, so you never actually knew who was cooking unless you checked the kitchen area.

That looped tape finally stopped, maybe the battery went dead. So did the Mayday call, either he died or his battery did when he ran out of gas. There was some form of interference preventing us from picking up any long distance ham radio stations. Seven hours after the radiation peaked, it was down to ~42.5R/hr and 49 hours after it peaked, it was ~4R/hr. If nothing else, that confirmed the 7/10 rule.

"I'll take over, you get some sleep."

"With all this noise? This wasn't the best idea I ever had."

I had nothing to lose by giving it a shot, I lay down and 20 seconds later, Amy was shaking me.

"It's 45 minutes before your shift, Mom said to wake you up and tell you to get cleaned up."

"I just laid down, Amy."

"Yeah, about 7 hours ago."

We didn't have enough water to take a real shower and I did a quick sponge bath, brushed my teeth and went to check on something to eat. It was a pot of something I

didn't recognize. I was hungry so it didn't matter. I got a bowl of whatever it was, a slice of homemade bread and sat down at the table nearest the radio shack.

"You ready to relieve me?"

"Hear anything?"

"Nothing I could make out."

"How's the radiation level?"

"Right on schedule, according to your spreadsheet. Sleep well?"

"I must have more tired than I thought."

"I'm going to get Damon in on this. That way, we can each have one shift a day and twice as much time to sleep."

"I'm sorry that I got you into this."

"I'm not. That apartment complex didn't have a shelter. All a person could do when there was a tornado warning was hide in a closet. If we had stayed there, I'd be off somewhere with the Guard and Mary would be home alone with the kids."

"Would you have gotten fallout?"

"That depends on where they hit and what the wind direction was."

"Did anyone change out the CO₂ scrubber?"

"I'll do it."

Our system used lithium hydroxide filters, similar to what they must have used on Apollo 13. We only had one size of cartridge, but they needed frequent changing, about once every 3 days. Unlike Apollo 13, we didn't have any way to measure the CO₂ concentration. On one of my shifts, I had set up a log so we could keep track of when we changed the cartridge. If one thinks about it, we're adding 88ft³ of clean air to the shelter per minute. The old air has to go somewhere and gets exhausted through a blast valve. We might have gotten by without the scrubber, but why take a chance?

Three weeks into our adventure, the radiation level was down to a little over 265mR/hr. At that level, a person would acquire a fatal dose in around 50 days, not counting the continuing radioactive decay. My figures were conservative because that was my nature. You didn't go out, unless you could stay out, thus the maximum level of 104mR/hr. While you were accumulating radiation, the fallout continued to decay, presumably assuring you never got a fatal dose. Assuming we went out at 49 days, the radiation level

at 179 days would be ~21.3mR and no one should ever reach 150R of accumulated exposure. This has nothing to do with what is considered to be a safe exposure level in normal times, that's probably something on the order of 5mR/year. What it has to do with is the maximum level you can get and avoid radiation sickness. If we had all the time in the world, I'd prefer not letting anyone out until we were down to ~50mR/hr. With a peak level of 425R/hr, that meant staying in the shelter ~82 days.

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When I had a chance to get Damon and Derek alone for a few minutes, I suggested they tell everyone we were getting close to leaving, but not to give them any specific information. They could start out with, 'just a few more days' and switch to 'soon'. I also suggested they wear earphones when talking to the other shelter, citing little pitchers' have big ears. At the very least, get us out to 56 days, ~84mR, or ~2R/day.

Derek felt it would just be easier if we told everyone that we could leave after 56 days and not have to support a lie. Damon and I agreed with his suggestion and we told anyone who asked, 56 days in shelter time. I caught Lance on a late night shift and explained our position to him. He agreed, probably because of the babies.

In case you're thinking that Chris didn't have much to do, think again. Changing the oil every 100 hours meant once every 4 days plus 4 hours. Over the course of 56 days, he'd have to fire up the PowerBOSS 13 times and change the oil in the hot Kohler generator. The concrete block room that held the generators wasn't cramped, he need room to work. Still, the oil had been heated for 100 hours. He'd drain it, change the filter and put 9 quarts of new oil back in. His elapsed time was well under 15 minutes, not bad considering he was working with everything hot. I'd done it once when the generator was cold and it took me 20 minutes.

I once tried to visualize what was happening here 20' deep in the ground. I placed myself on the patio, mentally, and tried to envision close to 30 people out there 20' down in the middle of the garden. It didn't work and I stopped before I gave myself a headache. There would probably be a layer of grit on everything, the decayed fallout from what was once Los Angeles. The wind had shifted and it was coming our direction from LA, not good. We were maybe 55 miles I thought, line of sight, from Van Nuys airport. The mountains between LA and here should have trapped some of the fallout.

I was wrong, of course, you can look it up. Palmdale Airport is listed as being 32.9 miles from Van Nuys Airport. If they used Nautical miles, that might make sense, 32.9NM equals 37.86SM. The only real measure we had was road miles and they have nothing to do with line of sight distance. I reviewed the figures in the log, wind direction, wind speed and elapsed time. It had taken 3 hours to get fallout, which was about right on the money for the wind speed and direction. It had taken a while for the radiation to peak, I guess I should assume we got radiation from all of the weapons that went off down there. The distance would also explain why we had 425R instead of 300R, like I expected.

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"That's 56 days, give me my Tyvek suit and I'll get suited up."

"That won't be necessary Ron, the radiation level is about 85mR/hr."

"Did the folks in the other shelter come out already?"

"No, I coordinated this with Lance; we're all coming out at the same time."

"If you kept us past the time it was safe to come out, we've probably been looted."

"I can't promise you that hasn't happened, but that was only 5 days back. This way when we go out, we can stay out."

"We can go home?"

"Up to you. Keep in mind that there is safety in numbers."

"I will. I'll keep in touch on channel 16. I gave Clarence one of my CBs and an antenna."

"Thank you kindly Gar-ree. Shirley and I'd better get home and see what's left."

"Wait a minute, Clarence, I want to loan you a rifle."

"What kind of rifle?"

"Springfield Armory M1A."

"Is that legal?"

"The rifle is, the large magazines and the Surefire suppressor aren't. Keep a 10 round magazine in it and the suppressor off and you'll be legal. If you have to use it, call for help on the CB. Be nice to my rifle, it cost a lot of money."

"How much is a lot?"

"Rifle with sling, \$1,800. Magazines ~\$14 each and the ammo about 30¢ a round. The suppressor has a MSRP of ~\$1,650 and the Tac-Force vest another \$50 plus \$100 for the knife plus the other accessories. Altogether, about four grand. So, you take good care of it."

"Gee, I don't know if I should take it."

"Take it for now. Once you decide what you and Shirley are going to do, we can talk about it, but the rifle isn't for sale."

I'd thought about it and I had 1 AR-15 and 3 M1As. Mary had the AR, I had an M1A, Damon wanted a shotgun and Derek had the M1A but would probably end up using the Tac-50. Clarence had a 12 gauge shotgun and a .38 Special. Ron had an M1A, 2 Elephant guns (.338 & .375), and several 5.56x45mms. I knew I could trust Clarence to take good care of my rifle and he'd been a friend for a very long time. I gave him 5 additional battle packs of the SA surplus (700 rounds).

After Ron and Clarence left, we went door to door checking the neighborhood. We found a lot of corpse's, both human and animal, and some empty homes. We didn't really know what to do with the bodies, but we couldn't just take them out and bury them in a mass grave without somebody trying to identify them and record their deaths. Chris and Dick, together with Damon and Derek loaded the bodies in a pickup and hauled them down to the Mortuary on Palmdale Blvd. and dropped them off. They said that they hadn't seen anybody on the trip. The dead animals were buried across the road at the construction site.

We had removed any cash and credit cards, destroying the latter and put the cash in a slush fund for the tract. We emptied the homes occupied by the dead and distributed the food among the families in the tract. Empty homes wouldn't be touched until we were sure the resident's weren't returning. We used vehicles belonging to the deceased to form a barricade at the entrance, but didn't post a guard for now. David and Lorrie returned to their home with the portable generator and 60 gallons of gas. I loaned David my other shotgun and some ammo. They also took a CB and antenna.

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The following day, a Patrol car pulled up at the barricade and ran his siren to get our attention. The male resident's went up to greet them and answer any questions they may have had. First, they wanted the names of any persons currently living in the housing tract. When we'd answered those questions they asked about the bodies at the mortuary, they'd determined they came from this housing tract. Lance explained that we'd checked all of the homes and removed the dead. He gave the Deputies a manila envelope with the cut up credit cards.

The Sergeant told him that as nearly as they could tell, maybe 25,000 out of the half million residents of the Valley survived, they had only begun checking the housing tracts. They found a few families that had successfully sheltered in place, so that number could be low. The most successful survivors had the plastic and duct tape recommended by DHS. We explained that two of our group had shelters and had provided space for a total of 7 families including 2 from other housing tracts. I gave them Ron and Clarence's names and addresses and told them where to find David and Lorrie. They didn't say a word about the weapons we had although they clearly included several ARs and the M1As were sporting 20 round magazines. If we need help, call them on CB channel 9.

It didn't take long to get several local radio stations back on the air. Time Warner was only broadcasting on channel 3, their reserved channel, and didn't have internet access. Over the course of the following week, 6 or 7 families returned to the housing tract, they found shelter in the Civic Center. When the informal census was announced, it showed the resiliency of the people of the Antelope Valley, ~150,000 had survived, about 30% of the population. However, the body count didn't indicate that 70% had died, that was more like 35% give or take.

That left ~175,000 people unaccounted for. Nobody had an explanation. For some reason, phone service wasn't restored immediately. As soon as they could staff the Water District, we had water back, but were told to run a faucet for 15 minutes before trying to use the water. Basically, our infrastructure was intact, save the electricity. Much of that came from Hoover Dam and some from Diablo Canyon. The Aqueduct wasn't flowing, either. Grocery stores were locked up tight and guarded by Sheriff's Deputies and the local National Guard unit. The unit was Bravo Company, 185th Armored Regiment of the California Army National Guard. The 756th National Guard Company is based in Lancaster.

The Palmdale unit appeared to be poorly manned, but I rather doubt the magazines in those M16s were unloaded. Derek was now wearing civilian clothing, lest he get sucked up into something, my idea. I could sense this made him very unhappy. He wanted to know where the Armory was and I told him on 30th Street East, just south of Palmdale Blvd., next to the bowling alley.

Two days later, when I got up, he was gone. I asked, only to be told that he went to B Company to check in and see what he could do to help out. When he didn't come back, it was apparent that the Company Commander had found something for him to do. A SFC is generally a Platoon Sergeant. That same day, Clarence and Shirley returned and asked which of the empty homes they could occupy.

"You have a problem, Clarence? If you need food, we can supply you some."

"Gar-ree, it's not that. We're the only 2 people in that housing tract. I got to feeling mighty insecure, if you know what I mean."

"Well, the house 2 doors east on my side of the street is empty. That's the smaller 2 master bedroom model. It was abandoned and no one has come back to claim it. I can call David and have him come over and pick the lock."

"Would you?"

You Can Run – Chapter 6

"Sure, with the understanding that if the residents come back, you'll have to move."

"Aren't there any houses that were standing empty before?"

"Only one, Darlene's. You'd have to furnish it, it's totally empty."

"Everything shut off?"

"We can turn it all back on. You'll have gas, water and sewer, but no electricity."

"No problem, we can light the stove with a match. Do you suppose I could get help moving?"

"We can ask Dick and Dave, they both have pickups and Dave has a small trailer."

Chris also volunteered to help, he could put sheets of plywood on his car trailer and haul a large amount of furniture. Most of the younger men offered to pitch in and help Clarence get moved. They thought they could get all of the big stuff in one day and Clarence could go back and empty cupboards and closets later. Amy and Sharon put together 2 boxes of food as a welcoming gift. She also loaned them all 5 of our kerosene lamps.

We were first in line when Costco reopened their doors. This week, they had a 6kw portable generator in stock, but only about 12 of them. Food purchases were limited to \$100, cigarettes 2 cartons, and everything else was one per customer. They sold out of generators in the first 20 customers, but Clarence had his. We took everyone old enough to smoke and loaded up on all the cigarettes we could. We also got a 100# bag of flour, a 25# bag of sugar, 6 cans of coffee and some miscellaneous items. \$100 doesn't buy much food.

We put Derek and Mary in the house with 2 master bedrooms, I'd mentioned and Damon and his flock took a house where we'd removed some bodies. That took 2 more care baskets of food, etc. Because he had a generator and I had gas, Clarence returned the oil lamps and we gave 3 to Mary and 2 to Damon. Derek came back after a week and the stripes were off his shirt. He was now wearing First Sergeant stripes on his chest. He wanted to know where we'd settled his family and set down a box, saying, "Don't ask."

The box held 30 ea. M67, baseball style fragmentation grenade. I'd only seen pictures and had FM 3-23.30 on my computer. There wasn't an instruction sheet in the box, I was on my own here and went to see Lance.

"Where did you get those?"

"Don't ask. Can you show me how they work?"

"They have this little safety clip here. You remove that and pull the pin. Loft the grenade and get down, they have a 15 meter fragmentation radius."

"How many do you want, I can let you have up to six."

"I don't know that I want any, Gary. I'll take six and lock them in my gun safe."

According to Army FM 3-23.30, the M26 and the M26A1 are the now obsolete grenades we used in Vietnam. They are oblong and are wrapped with a coil of piano wire notched to produce fragments.

M26/A1/A2, M57 and M61: The M26 series is in many ways an upgrade in basic principle of the Mk II. A similarly shaped, but not visibly ribbed fragmentation grenade. The M26 has a filling of Composition B contained within a sheet steel two part outer shell which covers a prenotched fragmentation coil inner liner. The use of the inner liner creates a highly predictable fragment pattern and causality radius. The grenade was found to have problems with complete detonation of the filler, and the M26A1 featured a tetryl booster to ensure complete detonation. The M61 was the product of a further Product Improvement Project or PIP, and is identical to the M26A1 with the exception of the additional safety clip for the spoon of the grenade on the M61. The M26A2 is identical to the M26A1 except for being fitted with the M217 impact fuze. The M57 is the equivalent of the M61 for the M26A1, and is the same as the M26A2 with the exception of the additional safety clip on the spoon of the grenade. I had struggled with that issue for a long time. Debate ensued whether it was the M26 or the M61. As you can see, it's the same grenade, regardless.

Don't get me started on the mistakes the military has made. What was wrong with the Phoenix missile? If they had to retire the Tomcats, why didn't they fix up the F/A-18s to carry the Phoenix? What's wrong with the M2HB .50BMG machine gun? Why are they trying to improve it with a piece of plastic, the M312? What was wrong with the M14 semi-automatic rifle? Nothing, nada, zip. It wasn't worth a tinker's dam as a full auto weapon, so what? The ammo weighed too much? Yeah it's heavy, but lighter than .30-06 ammo. I know, DuPont needed the money. In the United States, dynamite was manufactured by the DuPont Corporation well into the 1990s. Dynamite was eventually eclipsed by Water gel explosives, which are safer to handle.

Damon said that while WW III might be the worst man-made disaster, the two worst natural disasters would be: 1) the Earth getting hit by a large asteroid or comet; and 2) Yellowstone erupting as a Supervolcano. When I considered the magnitude of either of those, I had to agree. The events he described are named ELE, after the name of the girlfriend of some politician in Deep Impact. Actually, Téa Leoni discovered that ELE was the acronym for Extinction Level Event. Let's talk about that.

The classical "Big Five" mass extinctions identified by Raup and Sepkoski (1982) are widely agreed upon as some of the most significant: End Ordovician, Late Devonian, End Permian, End Triassic, and End Cretaceous. (Where is the Jurassic?)

These and a selection of other extinction events are outlined below. The articles about individual mass extinctions describe their effects in more detail and discuss theories about their causes.

488 million years ago – a series of mass extinctions at the Cambrian-Ordovician transition eliminated many brachiopods and conodonts and severely reduced the number of trilobite species.

444 million years ago – at the Ordovician-Silurian transition two Ordovician-Silurian extinction events occurred, and together these are ranked by many scientists as the second largest of the five major extinctions in Earth's history in terms of percentage of genera that went extinct.

360 million years ago – near the Devonian-Carboniferous transition a prolonged series of extinctions led to the elimination of about 70% of all species. This was not a sudden event – the period of decline lasted perhaps as long as 20 million years, and there is evidence for a series of extinction pulses within this period.

251 million years ago – at the Permian-Triassic transition Earth's largest extinction killed 53% of marine families, 84% of marine genera, about 96% of all marine species and an estimated 70% of land species (including plants, insects, and vertebrate animals). The "Great Dying" had enormous evolutionary significance: on land it ended the dominance of the Mammal-like reptiles and created the opportunity for archosaurs and then dinosaurs to become the dominant land vertebrates; in the seas the percentage of animals that were sessile dropped from 67% to 50%.

The whole of the late Permian was a difficult time for at least marine life – even before the "Great Dying", the diagram shows a late-Permian level of extinction large enough to qualify for inclusion in the "Big Five".

200 million years ago – at the Triassic-Jurassic transition about 20% of all marine families as well as most non-dinosaurian archosaurs, most therapsids, and the last of the large amphibians were eliminated.

65 million years ago – at the Cretaceous-Paleocene transition about 50% of all species became extinct. It has great significance for humans because it ended the reign of the dinosaurs and opened the way for mammals to become the dominant land vertebrates; and in the seas it reduced the percentage of sessile animals again, to about 33%. The K/T extinction was rather uneven – some groups of organisms became extinct, some suffered heavy losses and some appear to have got off relatively lightly.

Present day – the Holocene extinction event. A 1998 survey by the American Museum of Natural History found that 70% of biologists view the present era as part of a mass extinction event, possibly one of the fastest ever. Some predict that man's destruction of the biosphere could cause the extinction of one-half of all species in the next 100 years. Research and conservation efforts, such as the IUCN's annual "Red List" of threatened species, all point to an ongoing period of enhanced extinction, though some offer much lower rates and hence longer time scales before the onset of catastrophic damage. The extinction of many megafauna near the end of the most recent ice age is also sometimes considered a part of the Holocene extinction event.

Must have been some scientist who wrote that summary, he used all of those BIG words. I didn't study much biology, so I'll have to take his/her word for it. I think it's too early to determine whether WW III will qualify as an ELE. However, if we had even a small Comet or a small Supervolcano, on top of this mess, that could do it and the 3 Amigos would come to an unnoted exit. We didn't spend 56 days in a hole in the ground just to have that happen.

Damon went on to point out that WW III could just have easily been a chemical attack or a biological attack. I didn't bother to argue, biological yes, chemical, no. According to *The Last Days On Earth*, the disasters could include: 7. Gamma Ray Burst/Black Hole caused by a Supernova; 6. Computers taking over the world ala *Colossus: The Forbin Project* or *Terminator*; 5. A Supervolcano like Yellowstone blowing up; 4. An Asteroid impact on April 13, 2036 by Apophis; 3. Global Thermonuclear War – been there, done that, got the T-shirt; 2. A Pandemic; and 1. Global Climate Change.

A nuclear winter is about the same thing as a volcanic winter, except that a volcanic winter might not be followed by a volcanic summer. I speculated in *The Bird Flu* that a Pandemic could lead to a Global Thermonuclear War. However, there wasn't a cause and effect relationship, the war happened because Iran's Prez had big ideas and Israel finally had enough. The only reason we came through the Pandemic was prompt action by the CDC and the President of the US and because I painted a *best case scenario*.

Near as I can tell, Al Gore not only invented the internet, he invented Global Warming. He didn't get the Nobel Prize in Science, but he did get an Oscar. No, I didn't vote for him, why would I do a damn fool thing like that?

If you can immediately begin wearing an N-95 or N-100 mask and limit yourself to one trip to the grocery store to stock up on food, you should survive if you then quarantine yourself. If you're prepared, you won't need to make that trip, improving your odds. Tamiflu and Relenza help too, if you come down with it. With a fatality rate of ~60%, I'd be more than willing to risk taking Tamiflu.

Why not chemical, you ask? Chemical weapons are generally a local phenomenon. The broadest use would probably be poisoning a water supply. Some of the gases are very deadly, in local settings. I'll take my own advice, never say never. Back in chapter 2, I mentioned all of the bugs Russia developed. If you have those, why use chemicals?

While the world possesses enough nuclear weapons to kill everyone on the planet, we don't have enough delivery systems. That's one of the reasons Ron and I keep Clarence around, he has his eye on the sky, and he's a very good friend.

o

"Gar-Bear, got your ears on?"

"Negatory, they were dirty so I ran them through the washer and dryer."

"Smart-ass."

"Is that one notch up from butthead? What's up?"

"How are you making out over there?"

"Good. Clarence moved into Darlene's house."

"I'm here Ron, nice house. We're covering Gar-ree's front door."

"You across the street?"

"No we're at the front of the tract."

"Do you have power?"

"Got a genset at Costco."

"I'm going to switch mine over to natural gas and save the propane."

"Dick said he had the jets, if we could get a tank of propane."

"Why would you need that?"

"For the next disaster, bad things happen in 3s."

"I'll have to go ask, there aren't any phones."

"I'd appreciate if you could do that."

"What's the rush, we haven't cleaned up this mess yet?"

"Get one of those blowers and blow all the dust off everything. Might be a good idea to wear a Tyvek suit and your gas mask."

"Back up there, what next disaster?"

"I have a list; want me to read it to you?"

"Do you have the odds on any of the things on your list happening?"

"The odds of any one of them is 1:20,000. Not really, but Yellowstone has been active again."

"How do you know?"

"It was before the war when we still had national news."

"Then you don't know what it's doing now?"

"I don't believe that whoever attacked us nuked it, if that's what you mean."

"Forget it. How much propane do you want?"

"As big a tank as I can get. We'll have to fill it over time, I suppose."

"Clarence, you want one too?"

"Whatever works for Gar-ree works for me."

Our problem was simple, we didn't have any way to pay for the fuel. According to the radio, the companies supplying the utilities would continue to supply them, but it would be some time before they were able to bill for them. If they never billed, I'd be perfectly happy. There are certain disadvantages of having a Trust Fund in a bank halfway across the country. It's worse if your income comes from the government as in the case of Disability or Social Security. In all of the excitement just before the war, nobody had thought to check the mail. After, there wasn't any delivery and it didn't seem important. For whatever reason, Sharon checked it, probably out of habit. It was mostly junk mail, but there was a letter from the bank in Iowa.

"Gary,

I'm afraid it looks like we might have a war. After discussing the matter with the trustees, we decided to cash out all of the securities and hold the Trust balance in a certificate of deposit.

If there is a war, it may take some time to get the banking system reestablished. I contacted the manager of the Palmdale Branch of Wells Fargo where you have your checking account. We wired some funds that he is holding in cash for you. Present this letter and your photo ID to pick up the funds.

Sincerely,

Matt"

"How much?"

"Read the letter, it doesn't say."

"Is the Main Branch open?"

"Three days a week according to the radio, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. All of the small branches in the grocery stores are closed."

"What day is it?"

"Wednesday."

"Get your hat and let's get going."

"I never wear a hat."

"Then go without one."

This was worse than waiting for the war to start. Knowing Matt, he could have sent anywhere from \$2,500 to \$25,000. The trustees didn't distribute any capital gains although I had to pay taxes on them. In the years since Dad had died, the trust had grown because of the capital gains. On those few times when they gave us extra money from the trust, it came from those capital gains. I didn't even know the trust balance because I didn't read the annual statements.

We arrived and went inside and signed in to see the manager. Maybe 15 minutes later, we were called into his office. I handed him the letter and my California ID card. He asked to see my Wells Fargo card. That done he smiled and said he'd be right back. Yeah right, it took him 15 minutes, but it seemed more like an hour.

"I'm sorry, but we had to recount the money before we dispersed it."

"How much is it?"

"You don't know?"

"The letter didn't say."

They dispersed all the accumulated income, apparently the capital gains."

"I don't have any idea how much that is."

"\$45,400. We have it in \$100 dollar bills, is that ok?"

"Sure." (Anyone have an asthma inhaler?)

He then proceeded to remove the wrappers and counted out 454 one-hundred dollar bills. It was a stack about 4½" high. Then, once he counted it out, I signed a receipt and he had a guard walk us to the car.

"I'm surprised he didn't say, *Don't spend it all in one place.*"

"Why are you shaking, is your blood sugar low?"

"No, I haven't held this much cash money since we picked up from Carnivals in Davenport."

"How big were those pickups?"

"The biggest ran about thirty grand."

"And we ended up moving to California because you went on the pickups wearing a gun in a shoulder holster."

"Yep."

"And you don't have the gun anymore?"

"Nope."

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Clarence's new 6kw generator was actually a 5kw, it was the Home Site Power 6500 by Onan. How he got it remains a mystery, that model generator wasn't *Kalifornia legal*. I love to tell what all the things are that were prohibited by the PRK, but that would be impractical. It might be easier just to list what was legal in the PRK, the list is much shorter.

My gun was a Browning Hi-Power, I really like that pistol. That was back in the days when 13 round magazines were still legal in the PRK. I'm not sold on the caliber anymore, not enough stopping power. Still, I sure wish I had that gun back. With the proper ammo, it would do just fine. They had been available at Santa Fe Gun Galleria, but he wanted too much for them. I wonder if they were open again?

"Gar-Bear?"

"Yes, what's up?"

"Your voice sounds strange."

"Sharon checked the mail and there was a letter from the bank in Iowa. They sent some money to our Wells Fargo branch and we just picked it up."

"Must have been a tidy sum, I can hear it in your voice."

"Did you check on the propane?"

"That's why I'm calling, I did and he has 2 3,000-gallon tanks and can fill them if you have the money."

"I have the money. I'm not sure Clarence does, but I'll cover him until he can pay me back. Oh, I almost forget, Derek gave us a present. I'll give you six of them and print out a portion of the Field Manual. Did Sandy open back up?"

"Looked open, why, you need something?"

"Sharon and I got to talking about that Browning Hi-Power I had, I wish now I hadn't gotten rid of it."

"What happened to it?"

"I need money to pay bills and support my habit."

"Don't feel bad, I drank up a fairly nice boat."

"When can we get the tanks and the propane?"

"I scheduled both tanks for tomorrow, tell the driver and he'll arrange delivery of the propane."

"Great, come by when you can and I'll fill your gas tank and give your Derek's present."

"Maybe tomorrow."

I couldn't tell him on a radio channel, anyone with a scanner could have picked it up.

Ron showed up just before 10, I gave Damon directions where I wanted the tank, and Ron and I headed for High Desert Storm."

"Hi fellas."

"Sandy do have any Browning Hi-Powers beside the one with the Nazi markings?"

"That was consignment, he picked it up. I have 2, one new model in .40S&W and one Classic model in 9mm. Take your pick."

"Classic. Price?"

"\$799."

"Any magazines?"

"It comes with 2 10-round magazines."

"That wasn't what I meant."

"Try Whites, he has some imports, but I didn't tell you that."

"I need a shoulder holster, have one?"

"I have a Bianchi X15."

"I think that's what I had before. I need 15 boxes of Gold Dot 124gr +P and 5 boxes of Lawman 124gr ammo and 3 double magazine pouches."

I filed out the paperwork and paid for everything I bought. Ron took me to White's where I told him I had been referred and was looking for 7 imported surplus Browning Hi-Power magazines. He quoted a price, slightly higher than the 10-round Browning magazines. I pulled out the cash and we were out the door in 10 minutes. When I got home, Sharon wanted to go grocery shopping.

We went from store to store, finding about half of them open, Supplies were limited and stores limited purchases to cash only and sometimes with a dollar limit. We found one cigarette store open and bought 10 cartons of Kool's, 5 cartons of Marlboros and 2 cartons of Marlboro menthol (Amy). It began to get late and we headed home to avoid being out after curfew. The stores were either open M-W-F or T-Th-S. That meant that, if we wanted, we could go out the next day and see what was available.

I could have told you before we ever left the house, they wouldn't have much available, they'd only accept cash and they would no doubt limit your purchases. Many people wouldn't be able to go from store to store because the gas stations were all locked up tight. All the stories I'd read or written assumed that paper money wouldn't be worth anything. As long as we had a functional government, it was, even if it wasn't worth as much.

You Can Run – Chapter 7

The smaller Mom and Pop stores were all closed. Most of the chain stores like Albertson's, Stater Bros, Von's, etc. had backup power. Universally, they had help wanted signs in their windows. What food they had available was often sitting in the open packing cases, with the price on one flap and the limit on another. You could forget about the scanner, they were using price lists and either calculators or old fashioned mechanical adding machines. No matter, they weren't that crowded. I wanted to hit the places that sold in large quantities, ergo, Smart and Final, Sam's Club and Costco.

It no longer paid to be fussy about things like coffee brands; you took what they had or went without. More than once, all they had left was Yuban Columbian so we passed. Yuban Classic, Hills Bros., Maxwell House or Folgers's we'd drink and I liked French market, but I was the only one. We were temporarily rich, who knew how long that would last? We found some Yuban Classic 100% Arabica with no limits. I broke my own rule.

The propane was \$3/gallon and both Clarence and I got 2,700 gallons. He had some money and what he was short, we helped out. The delivery man said that there wouldn't be any more propane for some time to come. Think about it, that was over \$16 thousand.

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WATERLOO – It sits in the heart of south Waterloo's growing retail area. Thousands of cars pass by it every day on US Highways 20, 21 and San Marnan Drive. It sits 65 to 70 feet high. Yet hardly anyone notices it, and hardly anyone goes there except its employees.

It's MidAmerican Energy's liquefied natural gas facility. Distinguished by its large aqua blue storage tanks, it plays a key role in the energy needs of the Cedar Valley and the northern portion of MidAmerican's Iowa service area.

In fact, the utility has spent \$4.5 million on the facility over the last two years, upgrading equipment and safety controls – a major project hardly noticed by the general public.

The liquefied natural gas, or LNG, facility was built in 1974 by MidAmerican's predecessor, Iowa Public Service Co. It is one of three such facilities MidAmerican operates. The other two are in Des Moines and Bettendorf, each built, respectively, by two other Mid-American predecessors, Iowa Power & Light Co. and Iowa-Illinois Gas & Electric Co.

Like its sister plants, the Waterloo facility supplements the area's natural gas needs during times of peak demand – typically during winter months at the height of the heating season. It provides a ready supply of heating fuel in addition to the gas which comes in via pipeline from Northern Natural Gas Co., now another MidAmerican subsidiary.

The facility is nearly as old as Crossroads Center and was built when San Marnan was two-lane Iowa Highway 412. Just as the mall and the surrounding roads were upgraded, so too has the MidAmerican facility.

"The primary work was done last year and this year," said Mike Falk of Hudson, LNG facilities manager for MidAmerican. "You're looking at plants that were constructed in the '70s, and MidAmerican had continually looked at the plants and made the necessary upgrades. This was a big investment for the LNG plants, because the plants had been running, and hadn't been experiencing a lot of issues. But it was time. You can't drive your car for 30 years without doing something to it" besides change the oil, he said.

"Safety and reliability go hand in hand," MidAmerican spokesman Allan Urlis said. "Customers expect reliability. They expect to be able to heat and cool their homes and keep the lights on. If we're not operating safely that's going to impact reliability, and that's going to impact our customers. That's what the improvements are all about."

At the Waterloo facility, natural gas from pipeline suppliers is purified, liquefied and stored as a cryogenic liquid – 250 degrees below zero – during nonpeak periods. When it's needed, the liquefied natural gas is pumped, vaporized and delivered into distribution lines. The two storage tanks hold roughly 500,000 gallons each.

The Waterloo facility received extensive improvements to the purification and liquefaction processes. A new state-of-the-art electric regeneration heater was added, new purification valve skids installed, the east take pump skid was completely rebuilt and a new emergency shutdown system was installed that significantly upgraded plant safety. Emergency shutdown buttons are located throughout the plant in about 50- to 60-foot intervals. A new smoke detection system was installed that will go off if anyone lights so much as a cigarette on the site.

Despite the growth around it, making south Waterloo a much more populous area than in 1974, the MidAmerican facility is where it needs to be, Falk said.

"I don't think MidAmerican ever felt like it needed to move the facility. The facility is properly located to serve customers in the Waterloo area," Falk said. "The fact that it grew up around the plant might be an indication that the siting was good."

A large percentage of the \$4.5 million investment in the Waterloo facility was to improve safety procedures, which have been kept up throughout the facility's history. "We have growth, and we have a major highway running around us and a major shopping center, as well as Covenant Medical Center. We need to take steps to eliminate as many possible events from occurring as we can.

"I'm particularly proud of this particular plant because it's 30-something years old, but if you walk out here it's not going to look like a 30-year old plant. It's going to look like a newer plant because of the investments that we've made. There are some things show-

ing wear and tear. But structurally, from a safety perspective, this plant has never been safer."

My CB Buddy, Kraut, worked for Iowa-Illinois Gas & Electric Co. They were storing LNG underground for the Bettendorf facility. I suppose it would be appropriate to point out that Mid-America is owned by Warren Buffet, Bill Gate's buddy. Mid-America also owns some of the California Natural Gas system, including the Kern River Gas Transmission Company, where our natural gas comes from.

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"Why did we buy propane?"

"So we could heat and cook the next time the gas gets cut off."

"How can we do that?"

"We'll get Dick to convert everything that uses natural gas to propane."

"The way I see it, we have enough propane to grill everything for the next 250 years."

"At least. Would you rather need propane and not be able to get it or have propane and not need to use it?"

"That argument is getting old, Gary."

"You survived WW III, Sharon. I got the Browning Hi-Power for you to use, but I won't insist. We still have most of the money and we can put it up to cover our expenses for the next couple of years."

"Did Des Moines get hit?"

"I haven't heard that it did. Most of the news on the ham net is about cities that did get hit. I have a large US map on the wall and I am putting in pushpins like the guy on Jericho did when I hear of another city. So far, there's no pushpin in Des Moines."

"I wonder how Charlene and Geoff are?"

"Only way to find out is to drive up there. If we do, we'd better plan on taking her some groceries."

"Why?"

"Where does she usually shop?"

"Tehachapi at Albertson's, Mojave at Stater Bros. or any one of several Lancaster stores."

"And at Costco on Avenue L, right?"

"Right."

"We'll fill up the trunk with food and I'll get some shotgun ammo for Geoff's riot gun."

"You have any ammo for that hand gun?"

"We can get some."

"I'll figure out what they might like to eat and put it in the car. Where do we need to go to get ammo?"

"High Desert."

"I'll take you."

"Hi, there was no way to reach you; we're going to have to close up again."

"Ok, I need some .357 magnum."

"I have 158gr SJSP and 158gr SJHP."

"I'll take 5 boxes of SJHP."

"I'll get the paperwork so you can take Browning. Please put it up until the waiting period runs out."

"Sure."

Note, the ammo wasn't on sale and ran about \$40 per box of 50, \$216.45 total. When it was on sale, it sometimes went for about half of that. I told myself that the high price made up for me only giving her \$300 for the AR-15. I also laid out 2 boxes of slugs (20) and 10 boxes of 00 buck (50).

When we got home, Sharon started laying out things and I packed them in the trunk. When it was full, I had to put a few more things in the back seat. I put the Browning pistol in the 15X shoulder holster after I inserted a 13-round magazine and put that and the filled magazines pouches in the glove compartment. I'd wear my .45 and carry the rifle in the front seat with me, laid back so it wasn't too noticeable from outside the car. Condition 1 seemed most appropriate. I even threw in 25 gallons of gasoline.

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"Go the back way to Sierra Highway and take Sierra Highway to Mojave. There's no way to avoid going through Mojave, but we won't stop."

"Wouldn't the freeway be quicker?"

"Fine. Go the back way to Sierra Highway and take Sierra Highway to Avenue D and pick up the freeway there."

I wanted to avoid going through Palmdale and Lancaster, if possible, because I had the rifle in the front compartment of the car. From our house, one could take 50th St. E. north to Avenue E and take that west to Sierra Highway, then 1 mile north to Avenue D and west to the freeway onramp. Rosamond wasn't that much bigger than it was in the early '60s when I was at Edwards. It was built up west to Willow Springs race track and east about a mile from the one intersection on Sierra Highway with a stop light. That's how a person gets around the Land of Fruits and Nuts.

Sharon followed my suggested directions and we're probably lucky we didn't get a speeding ticket going through Mojave. When we got there, I did the macho thing and let her go to the door. Geoff unlocked the front door and I got out of the car and asked him to help me unload the supplies we brought them. They'd driven to that little store that claimed to be a grocery store in California City and got what they could. If you'd seen the store, you know that it wasn't much. When Sharon described the store to me, she said she didn't think they sold anything fit to eat.

We added gas to the pickup fuel tank first and drained the remainder into her car. I gave him the 70 rounds of 12 gauge and the 250 rounds of SJHP for the .357. He was down to about 15 shotgun shells containing #7½ shot. Charlene and Sharon wanted to visit and I was stuck. Geoff brought up the AR-15 and asked me if I still had it. I told him that my daughter-in-law, Mary, was using it and had military training. He offered to return the \$300 if he could get the rifle back. I told him I wanted to keep it, but I'd see if I could get him something in the same caliber, maybe a Mini-14 and some illegal magazines. I wasn't shy about pointing out that the ammo I brought was worth nearly \$250 and I didn't expect to be paid for it.

We left around 3pm so we could get home early. Sharon didn't seem to appreciate my refusing to sell the AR back. I replied, "Tough, you didn't feel that way when I bought it."

"What's the gun really worth?"

"If it were legal, maybe \$900, give or take, not counting that suppressor. The suppressor cost a grand, but only because it's hot, they list for around \$1,650."

"Why would you want a suppressor on a rifle? We aren't gangsters."

"A suppressor is one heck of a flashhider. That eliminates them locating you by your gun flash. Equally important is that the only real loud noise is the bullet crack and that won't tell the other side where you're located."

"Are you really going to get them a replacement rifle?"

"I will if I can find one."

Ron had several 5.56x45mms. Most were bolt action and he had bought them from Sandy, used. I occurred to me on the way home that one of those might be more accurate than a Mini-14, and cheaper. Then I wouldn't have to try and find 30-round PMI magazines for a Mini-14. 1,000-rounds of ammo would seem like a lot if you could only load 5 rounds at a time.

"Ron got your ears on?"

"Nah, they were dirty and I..."

"I told you that, did you forget?"

"What can I do for you?"

"Do you have a bolt action 5.56x45mm that you don't like and would like to unload?"

"I have a couple. Why, you don't like 5.56x45mms?"

"Geoff wants his AR back and I told him he couldn't have it. I told him I'd see if I could find a rifle for him."

"I have one I gave \$350 for you can have."

"How much?"

"How about \$400?"

"How about \$350?"

"\$375?"

"\$350, you said you didn't like the rifle."

"I don't, so what? I cost me a little over \$400, including tax and background check."

"I'll go \$400 so you aren't out much."

"That's what I asked for originally, sold."

You can't buy a Mini-14 in the PRK for \$400. You'd be lucky to find one for the MSRP of \$975 for the least expensive model. Then you'd have to find someone who had PMI magazines who was willing to part with them. I hadn't owned a Mini-14 for some time, but I always used PMI magazines and never had a problem. I paid \$275 for the stainless steel Mini-14 I bought from Gemco. I can't remember where I bought the blued rifle, but I think it cost less, it could have been Sherwood Guns on Parthenia. Gemco closed up and when the PRK started regulating firearms, especially assault rifles, Sherwood disappeared.

I paid Ron and took the rifle never removing it from the cheap sleeve style case. I pulled 1,000 rounds of M855 from the armory and got Sharon to take me back to Charlene's. I told Geoff I figured that made us even and hoped he enjoyed the rifle. They say timing is everything and I sort of timed it so we couldn't stay and visit, I didn't want to hear him complaining about the rifle. Not all of my relatives are necessarily my favorite people. I'm sure that some of them feel the same way about me.

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The problem with my seven ten rule spreadsheet was it only calculated the radiation level, and cautioned that you should wait to expose yourself to the fallout until after the level fell to 100mR/hr. The average annual maximum radiation dose according to the DOE is 5mR/mrem in toto. At the rate of 104mR/hr, you shouldn't get radiation poisoning. That doesn't mean you might not get cancer. I hadn't studied the results from Three Mile Island and Chernobyl; hence I didn't try to predict the cancer rate. Radiation poisoning tables say the maximum dose is 300R in 120 days, the basis for the spreadsheet. I almost always said, I'd prefer to wait until the level were 50mR or less.

Dose-equivalents are presently stated in sieverts:

0.05–0.2 Sv (5–20 REM)

No symptoms. Potential for cancer and mutation of genetic material, according to the LNT model: this is disputed. A few researchers contend that low dose radiation may be beneficial. 50 mSv is the yearly federal limit for radiation workers in the United States. In the UK the yearly limit for a classified radiation worker is 20 mSv. In Canada, the single-year maximum is 50 mSv, but the maximum 5-year dose is only 100 mSv. Company limits are usually stricter so as not to violate federal limits.

0.2–0.5 Sv (20–50 REM)

No noticeable symptoms. Red blood cell count decreases temporarily.

0.5–1 Sv (50–100 REM)

Mild radiation sickness with headache and increased risk of infection due to disruption of immunity cells. Temporary male sterility is possible.

1–2 Sv (100–200 REM)

Light radiation poisoning, 10% fatality after 30 days. Typical symptoms include mild to moderate nausea (50% probability at 2 Sv), with occasional vomiting, beginning 3 to 6 hours after irradiation and lasting for up to one day. This is followed by a 10 to 14 day latent phase, after which light symptoms like general illness and fatigue appear (50% probability at 2 Sv). The immune system is depressed, with convalescence extended and increased risk of infection. Temporary male sterility is common. Spontaneous abortion or stillbirth will occur in pregnant women.

2–3 Sv (200–300 REM)

Severe radiation poisoning, 35% fatality after 30 days. Nausea is common (100% at 3 Sv), with 50% risk of vomiting at 2.8 Sv. Symptoms onset at 1 to 6 hours after irradiation and last for 1 to 2 days. After that, there is a 7 to 14 day latent phase, after which the following symptoms appear: loss of hair all over the body (50% probability at 3 Sv), fatigue and general illness. There is a massive loss of leukocytes (white blood cells), greatly increasing the risk of infection. Permanent female sterility is possible. Convalescence takes one to several months.

3–4 Sv (300–400 REM)

Severe radiation poisoning, 50% fatality after 30 days. Other symptoms are similar to the 2–3 Sv dose, with uncontrollable bleeding in the mouth, under the skin and in the kidneys (50% probability at 4 Sv) after the latent phase.

4–6 Sv (400–600 REM)

Acute radiation poisoning, 60% fatality after 30 days. Fatality increases from 60% at 4.5 Sv to 90% at 6 Sv (unless there is intense medical care). Symptoms start half an hour to two hours after irradiation and last for up to 2 days. After that, there is a 7 to 14 day latent phase, after which generally the same symptoms appear as with 3-4 Sv irradiation, with increased intensity. Female sterility is common at this point. Convalescence takes several months to a year. The primary causes of death (in general 2 to 12 weeks after irradiation) are infections and internal bleeding.

6–10 Sv (600–1,000 REM)

Acute radiation poisoning, near 100% fatality after 14 days. Survival depends on intense medical care. Bone marrow is nearly or completely destroyed, so a bone marrow transplant is required. Gastric and intestinal tissue are severely damaged. Symptoms start 15 to 30 minutes after irradiation and last for up to 2 days. Subsequently, there is a 5 to 10 day latent phase, after which the person dies of infection or internal bleeding. Recovery would take several years and probably would never be complete.

10–50 Sv (1,000–5,000 REM)

Acute radiation poisoning, 100% fatality after 7 days. An exposure this high leads to spontaneous symptoms after 5 to 30 minutes. After powerful fatigue and immediate nausea caused by direct activation of chemical receptors in the brain by the irradiation, there is a period of several days of comparative well-being, called the latent (or "walking ghost") phase. After that, cell death in the gastric and intestinal tissue, causing massive diarrhea, intestinal bleeding and loss of water, leads to water-electrolyte imbalance.

Death sets in with delirium and coma due to breakdown of circulation. Death is currently inevitable; the only treatment that can be offered is pain therapy.

50–80 Sv (5,000–8,000 REM)

Immediate disorientation and coma in seconds or minutes. Death occurs after a few hours by total collapse of nervous system.

More than 80 Sv (>8,000 REM)

US military forces expect immediate death. A worker receiving 100 Sv (10,000 REM) in an accident at Wood River, Rhode Island, USA on 24Jul64 survived for 49 hours after exposure, and an operator receiving between 60 and 180 Sv (18,000 REM) to his upper body in an accident at Los Alamos, New Mexico, USA on 30Dec58 survived for 36 hours.

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Exposure to a constant level of 104mR/hr for 120 continuous days would result in you receiving a total exposure of 300R/REM, they're not the same, but in this case, close counts. That's an exposure to 2.5R per day. Over the period of those 120 days, the fallout should (note my choice of words) continue to decay. In the example in this story, the radiation would decay to about 9mR/hr by the end of one year. Less radiation is always better, if you can, stay in the shelter, what you can't see can kill you.

KI and KIO₃ only protect your thyroid; and then only if you take it before you're exposed to radioactive iodine. Prussian Blue (Radiogardase) is used to remove radioactive cesium and thallium from your system and that's all it does. If nothing else, limit your exposure by staying in your shelter at night or when you don't need to be out. Maybe it will be a good thing if the internet is down and the phones don't work after WW III, I won't get blamed for people misinterpreting what the spreadsheet represents. I got quite a few requests.

◦

Did Ron just trick me into paying his price for a rifle he didn't like? I hate it when he does that. Or did I just end up spending a total amount of money equal to the real value of the AR-15? I should have just bought a ranch rifle from Ruger in the first place and talked someone into ordering me some of the 30-round PMI magazines. I could have fixed it up just like the first one I had, Butler Creek folding stock, flashhider and 11 30-round magazines. I had a case of PMC 5.56x45mm back then plus a few hundred rounds of ammo from Yugoslavia.

I know that everyone read: *Vulnerability of populations and the urban health care systems to nuclear weapon attack – examples from four American cities* by William C Bell and Cham E Dallas, right? I know I saw the study mentioned on Frugal's website. I had downloaded the entire study; it was about 35 pages long and read it with interest. They didn't include LA in their study, only New York City, Chicago, Washington DC and Atlan-

ta. Among the consequences of this outcome would be the probable loss of command-and-control, mass casualties that will have to be treated in an unorganized response by hospitals on the periphery, as well as other expected chaotic outcomes from inadequate administration in a crisis. Vigorous, creative, and accelerated training and coordination among the federal agencies tasked for WMD response, military resources, academic institutions, and local responders will be critical for large-scale WMD events involving mass casualties.

If they had included LA, it would have been impossible to foresee the consequences. Aside from the blast and thermal effects, you had all those gangs to factor in; they're like cockroaches because they can survive anything. I said we hadn't gotten an EMP attack. As far as I knew, that was true, based on the evidence I had. However, an EMP attack, if improperly placed, might not affect the entire country. I only brought that up because those cockroaches came up 14 looking for food, water, shelter and valuables.

I wanted to yell, Μολών λαβέ like Leonidas did. I didn't get the chance, they came in with their guns blazing and wouldn't have heard me. They did it in broad daylight; stupid, if you ask me. We didn't expect the attack any more than you did. It was likely one of the gangs from South Central, but I don't know which one. It could have been the Bloods, the Crips or any one of the many black gangs. California street gangs can be divided into racial categories: African American, Asian American, Hispanic-American, Indian-American, Italian-American and White.

Why did they attack us? I can't answer that question, thank God there weren't many of them and the entrance of the tract was blocked with cars. It was the day after Thanksgiving, Black Friday, 2009. Sharon called the Sheriff on channel 9 asking for help because we were being attacked by a heavily armed gang. We responded rapidly using all available weapons and had some help from the residents who had returned. We hadn't really had time to get organized but we did have a Green Beret and an absent First Sergeant. The attackers had handguns and we mostly were using long arms, although we had to share some of the handguns this time.

We had one small advantage; the rifles were far more accurate than their handguns. Most of us did our best to stay far enough back simply to improve our efficiency. Had they attempted to come in the tract from the east or west, we could have had a different outcome. The best we could manage was to use cars parked in front of homes for cover. The break in the fence for the entrance isn't all that wide, 2 sidewalks and a 2 lane street with parking. These guys were semi-organized, that didn't help.

Apparently, they didn't want to be targets, they wouldn't stand still long enough for old guys, like me, to really sight them in. Clarence waved to me, motioning me to join him. From his vantage point, he was out of the line of fire, I wasn't. I'm just too old to crawl a ½ block on my belly; I managed, somehow.

"You ok, Gar-ree?"

You Can Run – Chapter 8

"They missed."

"I was thinking we should go to our backyard and put a couple of step ladders up against the block wall. We should be able to get some of them. Damn gangsters."

"We stick our heads above that wall, we're likely to get them shot off."

"This is nothing more than a semi-organized drive by shooting. I take it your cowboy hat isn't Kevlar?"

"Felt, 4X."

"Come on, we'll just lay down some suppressing fire. That's what they call it when you shoot to force them to keep their heads down, right?"

"You've been reading Wiki, Clarence."

"No I ain't, I saw that on TV."

"What were you watching?"

"Combat."

"If I get killed, I'm coming back to haunt you, partner."

We pulled 2 6' step ladders up to the wall and I ditched my hat, no sense in getting it shot up. We eased up the ladders and raised our heads just enough to see over the block wall. No one seemed to notice us. I saw Clarence pull out his .38, I went for my .45. The situation called for spray and pray, not aimed fire. I only had the magazine in the pistol plus 6 more, 57 rounds. Our pattern seemed to be to pop up, fire 3 rounds and duck back down.

While he was reloading, I kept popping up and down, firing 3 more rounds. Just as he popped up to start emptying his cylinder a second time, help arrived. Nothing spectacular, just an up-armored Hummer sporting a M240. They came from the east and had those bad guys trapped. To the west, Sheriff's Deputies were setting up a roadblock, back a ways. Those gangsters started to fall and then threw down their firearms. The National Guard troops must have not noticed right away, they kept shooting.

"Cease fire, cease fire," I heard. I wasn't about to look over the wall again.

"Sling your rifle, Clarence, barrel down. You can reload your revolver, but keep it holstered."

We dragged the ladders back to the garage, replaced the 20-round magazines with the legal 10-round magazines and slung our rifles. I put a fresh magazine in my .45 and set it to condition 2. When my hat was properly perched on my head, we headed towards the entrance to see if we could learn the outcome. We had M16s pointed our way until the soldiers saw our slung rifles and holstered handguns. The surviving attackers were either loaded into Deputies cars or into an ambulance, depending on their condition. We both kept our mouths shut, Lance knew some of the Deputies from when he'd worked at Plant 42 and we let him do the talking. Now that I think about it, that roadblock we had across the front of the housing tract, saved our butts.

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We hadn't gotten close enough to the attackers to use the hand grenades. That left them for the next time, if there was a next time. That brings me full circle, it's not if, but when and what. I once saw a poll on one of the websites. The question was when will TSHTF? It seems the majority thought it would happen by 2012. I would have agreed with one person who apparently thought Hillary would win the election. He/she thought it would happen as soon as the coronation was over.

It happened during Obama's first year in office, shortly after Labor Day, 2009. After the war, we didn't get any national news because there were no communications from east of the Rockies. Had 'they' detonated a high altitude nuke too far east to take all of the nation's communications? Our shootout attracted the attention of KTPI and some of the other local radio stations and even Times Warner had a short spot. They referred to a small local eastside housing tract and no names were given. They had one or two details I'd have rather they left out, mentioning the concrete block wall and the roadblock set up at the entrance.

While no one gave a reason for the attack, it seemed likely that people would think we had something worth taking. We did, but it wasn't worth dying over. We had food, fuel, weapons and ammunition. Unlike Lance, all of our food wasn't the same as the LTS 1 year deluxe packages. We bought the things we normally ate, except in large quantities. Without a Country Living grain mill, wheat would have been hard to convert to flour. Lance had one, but I felt funny asking to borrow it and didn't store any wheat.

However, that didn't mean we couldn't buy some just that we never had before. Now, there wasn't any way to contact Walton Feed and buy some. In the Big Valley, there are several producers of wheat. In fact, during 2006, California produced 430,300 acres of wheat other than durum and 65,000 acres of durum for a total of 495,300 acres devoted to the production of wheat, some of it in Los Angeles County. The majority was hard red winter wheat. Hard red = bread and durum = pasta. We didn't need much.

We could either borrow Lance's grinder or try to find our own. First, we had to find some wheat, both durum for pasta and hard red or white for bread. Wait, that means we'll have to find a pasta maker too. We started asking around and finally located both kinds

of wheat. It came bagged in 50 pound paper sacks, just like the popcorn. We asked about grain mills and he told us where to find a Country Living grain mill, spare parts and even the kit to motorize it. The same store sold the pasta attachment for Sharon's Viking Mixer. Hell, I didn't even know they made one.

They set us up with 2 spare sets of grinding plates for the mill, telling us they usually lasted 4 years, but were only guaranteed 1 year. The bearings must last longer; he only suggested we buy one spare set. It would seem that from now on, all of our bread and pasta products would be made from whole wheat. It would appear that we weren't as well prepared as I thought.

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With less than ½ of the homes occupied, plus Derek off working with Company B, we were short on people to mount an effective means to protect the housing tract. We kept the roadblock in place and put a pair of people on the entrance in 4 hour shifts. That actually meant 7 teams so we had an extra pair if someone came down sick. I had enough seeds so I could share them with everyone in the housing tract. If they knocked down the 4 fences dividing up those 4 backyards in the center of the tract, we'd have a huge, protected garden area.

It was getting awfully cold too; there was a lot of dust and smoke still in the air. Our entire backyard had been tilled, we could make one pass before it snowed, making it easier come spring to till the backyard for a garden. Lowes had a Troy-Bilt - 195cc 16" CA Model Super Bronco Rear Tine Tiller for about \$700. Our consumption was getting to be conspicuous.

I talked Aaron about tilling both our backyard and Clarence's. I told him I'd provide gas if he would till theirs and Derek's. He said he wanted paid. I asked how much and he said he wanted a rifle, just like Mary's, and some ammo. The only AR-15s sold in Kalifornia had the integral 10-round magazine.

The 2000 Assault Weapons Ban in the state of California sparked a renewed interest in the AR-15 rifle. It is estimated that some 60,000 California Legal AR-15s are in existence in that state. Replacing the Lower Receiver of a standard AR-15 with one that has a fixed (10 round) magazine (see below for instructions) will render the firearm "California legal", and able to utilize banned features such as a telescoping stock and pistol grip. The magazine is not detachable so to load the rifle a shooter must pull the rear takedown pin, hinge the upper receiver on the front takedown pin, and load the now exposed magazine either with a stripper clip or by hand, then close. Popular lower receivers for this purpose are manufactured by Stag Arms, Fulton Armory, Dane Armory, Mega, and Ameetec. Stag makes a lower receiver called the STAG-15 which is considered an "off-list" receiver by the CA DOJ and is legal.

As of December 2006, Doublestar, Stag Arms, CMMG, and MEGA all qualify as "off-list" lowers in the state of CA. There is also one model made by Colt, the CAR-A3 HBAR

Elite, that was never banned by name and thus still legal to own in California provided it has the correct configuration. This receiver can be made into a full rifle if the following requirements are met: the receiver has a fixed magazine with no more than 10 cartridges - in which case the rifle may have pistol grips, folding or collapsing stocks, etc.; or, the receiver may have a detachable magazine but may NOT possess any sort of attachment such as pistol grips, folding or collapsing stocks, etc.

"I need a ride."

"Where are you going?"

"Sandy's."

"Whatcha need?"

"Another AR-15."

"I'll take you but I've never seen one in her store."

"I know for a fact that Santa Fe sells the CA legal AR-15s with the 10-round fixed magazine."

"Then why do you want to go to Sandy's?"

"To see if she might have a standard semi-auto lower."

"I'll pick you up in 15 minutes."

"Hi fellas, how can I help you today?"

"I'm looking for a standard semi-auto lower for an AR-15."

"I can't install that for you."

"Do you have any?"

"They're \$300, how many do you want?"

"I don't know, how about 3? How about 3 CA legal AR-15s?"

"We don't sell those and we have no way to order one. Try Santa Fe Gun Galleria, he usually has several. \$974.25, total."

I paid her and Ron took me to Santa Fe Gun Galleria. His door was locked but he waived so we waited while he unlocked.

"Kind of hard to do business if you're locked up."

"If I recognize the person at the door, I open up. Help you today?"

"I'm looking for a CA legal AR-15."

"I have new or used with the new lower."

"How much for the used?"

"\$1,299."

"Do you have 3?"

"Yes, do you want 3?"

"Yes, please."

"\$4,218.50."

"Gar, are you sure you want to spend that kind of money?"

"I don't want to, no. However, I promised those kids' birthday presents."

After we left, no waiting period for some strange reason, Ron was in my face. "What do you mean you promised the kids' birthday presents?"

"I had to explain away buying 3 rifles at the same time."

"Now what?"

"I'll get Derek or Mary to swap out the lowers with the lowers I bought from Sandy."

"And?"

"Then I have 3 Kalifornia illegal AR-15 rifles. All I'll need to do is come up with some magazines and some ammo."

"Will that work?"

"The used rifles are Colts. The used lowers are Colts. I don't know for sure, but they should."

Lance had gotten 100 magazines for his 4 rifles. I hoped I could talk him out of 20. If I could, I'd get 1 more from Mary and each rifle would have 7 magazines, standard government issue. On the way back, we stopped by White's and got 6 magazine pouches,

3 pistol belts and 3 ALICE harnesses. I knew that if I were anywhere else in the country, I could have purchased a new AR-15, like a Bushmaster for less than I paid for the used rifle. If I knew in 1982 what I know now, I would have never moved to California. Mary brought back the modified rifles in about 2 hours with one magazine. Lance sold me 20 for \$15 apiece.

Did I miss something? Did you catch it? I gave 1,000 rounds to Geoff, leaving me with 1,000 rounds of 5.56x45mm. Mary had all of those and wanted more. I needed at least 7,000 rounds of M855, SS109 ammo. I couldn't ask Derek, he'd already complained that the Guard was low on ammo for their M16s. I thought maybe I might be able to get more 30-round magazines from him, but no ammo.

o

"How many?"

"At least 18."

"Dad, I don't know, I'll have to look. Mary said the new rifles are in fairly good condition."

"They are, but they're broken."

"What's wrong with them?"

"I don't have any ammo."

"Maybe I can help. Do you remember I told you we were short of ammo?"

"I didn't think you could help."

"Get your fingers out of your ears and listen, Dad. I said were low on ammo. We aren't anymore, we got some from Ft. Irwin who got it from MCLB, Barstow. M855 ok?"

"But, I want 7,000 rounds."

"That's exactly the amount our shipment was short."

"Are you sure?"

"Positive."

"I don't know what to say."

"Thank you usually works."

"Thank you."

"It will take me a few days to work it out, but I'll bring it as soon as I can. Meanwhile, get ammo from Mary to fill the rifle magazines that you have now."

"She doesn't have enough, I'll borrow some from Ron."

Mary had 16 filled magazines, 480 rounds. To fill the 21 magazines I had, would take another 630 rounds. $480 + 630 = 1,110$. Ron claimed he had at least 30 50-round boxes. I have to borrow 3 boxes and his ammo was m193, not M855. Lance had M855 and he was just across the street, maybe I'd better borrow ammo from him.

"Do you ever think of anything besides guns and ammo?"

"Yes, dear. I sometimes think about how much toilet paper we have. I sometimes think about how much food we have. And sometimes, I realize that we haven't filled our prescriptions since before the war. But mostly I worry that I'll run out of cigarettes."

That was a recurrent theme. The people who didn't smoke were lucky; they saved a lot of money and never had to worry about feeding a bad habit. I had it worse because I smoked menthol cigarettes. Not just any menthol, but Kool's 100s. I had to be desperate before I'd move to Kool's Kings. If I had a file drawer full of smokes, I'd want two drawers or the entire cabinet. A whole case costs about \$1,800 and contains 60 cartons.

"What movie are you going to play tonight?"

"Watch whatever you want, I'm watching *The Longest Day*."

"A war movie? Don't you have a belly full of war by now?"

"Do you know the name of the real guy portrayed by Red Buttons in *The Longest Day*?"

"How would I know something like that?"

"His name was John Steele. Though injured and deafened by the church bells, Private Steele survived his ordeal. He continued to visit the town throughout his life and was an honorary citizen of Ste. Mère Église."

"More useless knowledge, what good does it do?"

"It keeps me entertained, Sharon. It's probably not important to anyone but John Steele's family."

I had most of the major war movies; my favorite was the John Wayne Movie, *In Harm's Way*, a work of fiction based loosely on events in the South Pacific during WW II. I liked

Top Gun, Platoon, Full Metal Jacket, Heartbreak Ridge, Hamburger Hill and We Were Soldiers. I may have to add *Gardens of Stone*.

Once, when Amy was stuck on a paper for history class, I suggested she compare the Battle of Thermopylae with the Battle of the Alamo. It impressed her teacher, she got 100%. There were more Greeks at Thermopylae than defenders in Texas, but there were more Persians than Mexicans. The Greeks held out for 3 days, the Alamo for 13 days. Had the Greeks not been betrayed, they'd have made it 13 days or more.

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I now had 4 AR-15s, all used and ~2,000 rounds of ammo per rifle, plus at least 13 magazines for each of the rifles. A Ma Deuce would have been better than the Tac-50, but none were available. Something similar could be said about having LAW rockets or M203s and a few cases of 40mm grenades. We should be thankful, I guess, that we had any AR-15s or M67s. Derek came up with 1 M69 Practice Grenade and two full boxes of the M228 fuzes, which came 45 to the box. After we practiced, I was forced to give up my M67s, I couldn't throw the grenades far enough. Maybe I should switch to Wheaties.

Ron wasn't convinced that the old wives tale was true, claiming that there wasn't much worse than the war we'd been through. I could think of several things: 1) they could have nuked Palmdale; 2) Yellowstone could erupt; and, 3) Clarence might miss the rock. The war had created poor living conditions and we had disease outbreaks according to the ham radio. The problem there was, we weren't hearing anything from east of the Rockies. The most common waterborne or water washed diseases are dysentery, typhoid and cholera. There are 2 types of typhoid vaccines and two oral cholera vaccines in the US. Our last cholera outbreak was in 1911.

We had no idea what to expect in terms of a nuclear winter. It was already cold, but southern California usually got rain in the winter and snow only fell at the higher elevations. In an especially bad year, we might get 1"-3" of snow, but it would be gone in a day or two.

A study presented at the annual meeting of the American Geophysical Union in December 2006 found that even a small-scale, regional nuclear war could produce as many direct fatalities as all of WW II and disrupt the global climate for a decade or more. In a regional nuclear conflict scenario where two opposing nations in the subtropics would each use 50 Hiroshima-sized nuclear weapons (ca. 15 kiloton each) on major populated centers, the researchers estimated fatalities from 2.6 million to 16.7 million per country. Also, as much as five million tons of soot would be released, which would produce a cooling of several degrees over large areas of North America and Eurasia, including most of the grain-growing regions. The cooling would last for years and could be "catastrophic" according to the researchers. I had both of the papers that the report was based on stored as Nuclear Winter part 1 and Nuclear Winter part 2.

The problem with the studies was that the number of weapons used wasn't limited to 100 and the size wasn't limited to 15kT. As long as all you wanted was a D Handle Grain Hog Snow Scoop, you could get it at Lowes. Not the most pleasant way to remove the snow. There's never a 9' Indian around when you need one.

The subject of building fences around our homes didn't come up, this time. In fact, we were more interested in the possibilities of removing the fences, giving us a larger garden area. We got our first snowfall earlier than expected and none of the fences got pulled down. Aaron did get the backyards tilled everyplace I wanted it done and I had to give him one of my new used rifles and 2,000 rounds of ammo. Against Damon's wishes, he signed up for guard duty. I think Damon objected because Aaron was only 16.

o

WW I was our grandfather's war, WW II and Korea, our father's wars and Vietnam was our war. Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom were the Bush's wars. Who was going to step up and claim WW III? Who would want to? Maybe we should blame it on the Iranians, most folks in this country didn't much care for them. They were the Shi'a, if that means anything. There are a number of Islamic religious denominations, each of which has significant theological and legal differences from each other but possesses similar essential beliefs. The major schools of thought are Sunni and Shi'a; Sufism is generally considered to be a mystical inflection of Islam rather than a distinct school. According to most sources, estimates indicate that approximately 85% of the world's Muslims were Sunni and approximately 15% were Shi'a. I suppose they're mostly toast now.

We didn't really know because we had no idea of the outcome of the war. Because I couldn't pick up anyone from east of the Rockies, I started to believe that I'd been wrong about 'them' not using a high altitude EMP weapon. We tried to flag down some of the Guard troops without avail. I asked Derek when he came home and he could confirm that communications were down, but couldn't confirm the EMP weapon. They were taking their orders from the Governor. As far as he knew, the NCA was out of the picture.

I wasn't going to argue with Ron about whether or not we'd have 3 disasters, time would tell one way or the other. Even if I knew, I won't tell, I don't want to be too predictable. Besides, Ron had a point; we weren't over this one, yet. Aaron came up with a scheme to get more ammo for his rifle; he'd shovel the walk for 100 rounds of 5.56x45mm, using my shovel. I counted offering him 30 rounds, take it or leave it. He hemmed and hawed, but he finally accepted. If the snow kept coming down like it had this time, he'd be up to a case in no time.

If Derek got more ammo in, I could always hit him up for more. He explained that time they were out for Christmas that the military was very careful about their ammo. One time when he was in Kosovo, he accidentally overloaded one magazine making him short in a second. He thought he was missing one cartridge and nearly panicked. I think they get too excited over missing ammo, but hey, you either have to shoot it or have the correct number of rounds, 210.

We didn't have improved flashhiders for the 3 new rifles. At the moment, I only needed one more, for Aaron's rifle. I thought about asking Dave to machine one and never got around to asking. My next thought was to ask Damon to go fishing, down in Fountain Valley. Unfortunately, 14 was closed, as was 138. He couldn't get there from here. While Palmdale had equipment to open the roads, they'd no sooner get the streets plowed out than it would snow again, dumping anywhere from 6" to a foot of new snow. Besides, in the 20 some years we'd lived here, they'd never plowed anything but the primary streets.

In order to finance the local economies, the Governor issued an edict that the sales taxes being collected would remain in the communities for local use. It didn't really help, most people didn't have any income and tax revenues were nearly non-existent. It turns out that the cities of Lancaster and Palmdale were taking a share of any food delivered to either community and paying most of the employees in food and fuel. Amy was out of work, the DCFS had shut down for the duration.

I suppose our biggest concerns were food, fuel and security, in that order. Everyone has to eat and we needed fuel to provide power. We provided our own security, such as it was. It primarily consisted of a manned roadblock at the entrance to the tract and an occasional roaming patrol. More often than not, that patrol was made by Clarence and me. I get tired of being stuck in the house and would bundle up in my parka, strap on my weapons and walk the block to Clarence's. He'd come out all bundled up and we'd make a full loop of the tract, ending up back at his place.

He'd invite me in for coffee and not one to be rude, I'd accept. We'd visit over coffee for a while, I'd bundle back up and complete my second circuit ending up at home, exhausted. I was paying my dues for sitting on my backside in front of my computer for too many years. It was hard work because many homes were empty; hence their sidewalks hadn't been cleared of snow. I told you it snowed, right?

You Can Run – Chapter 9

The worst snow I could remember in my life happened when I was little, living on the farm north of Greene. Farmers planted groves of trees to keep the buildings from getting buried in snow. The snow drifts that year, maybe the winter of '48-'49, were 20' high.

Contrary to the title, it was easy for me to hide; I just went into my office and sat down at the computer that had been returned to the house. I could sit there for hours being totally ignored unless Udell needed another battery for one of his toys. I could keep an eye on Lance's and Dave's places, easily and with a little neck straining, Dick's. As long as the snow kept coming down I felt we were safe.

We were even able to build a small greenhouse using the patio supports, some 2x4s and a large roll of plastic. We stapled plastic on top of the patio cover and despite the bitter cold, that plastic box started to warm up. It did better when we used bags of soil to hold the plastic down on the bottom. As an experiment, I got one of Sharon's 6' planter boxes, filled it with a layer of rock and a bag of plant soil and planted some lettuce. When it took hold, I decided to get the other 3 planters and plant some more, timed so we'd have a supply until planting time. To get just right amount of heat we had to add a Heat Mate HMHC2230 23,000-btu Convection Kerosene Heater that would heat up to 900ft².

I think maybe if I write another story, I use the latest equipment, like the Capstone micro-turbine which is available in 30kw or 60/65kw in the small sizes. The also produce heat and are available to run on any kind of fuel. With one of those, we could use gas, diesel, kerosene or aircraft fuel, including all of the military fuels. Not only would the 65kw unit supply your lights, it would heat your house.

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When Derek had sighted in the Tac-50, I got a chance to fire it. They were right about the recoil, it wasn't much more than my 590A1. I wore earplugs and cuffs to help block the sound and still heard the rifle very distinctly. Derek had sighted in with the match ammo and then fire 3 rounds of Raufoss to confirm he had it right. The only difference between my Tac-50 and the others was the night vision, which I didn't have. When it was available, I didn't have 8 grand and when I did, it wasn't. It had to be pretty good, ITT was fined \$100 million for selling them to China. Half of the fine was suspended for 5 years and would be forgiven if they came up with a 4th generation nightscope.

Had I been thinking, I'd have somehow managed to squeeze out the price of 3 Bushmasters with the 20" barrel, about \$1,100 each, and had someone buy them for us. I didn't care for the AR-15/M-16 and if I hadn't been able to get one for \$300, I probably still wouldn't have any. The rifle had a design problem requiring extensive cleaning. H&K overcame that with the G-36. Since the XM-8 rifle they'd never issued was based on the G-36, it was probably a much better rifle. On 31 October 2005, the XM8 program

was formally suspended, "pending further US Army reevaluations of its priorities for small caliber weapons, and to incorporate emerging requirements identified during Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The Government will also incorporate studies looking into current capability gaps during said reevaluation." I guess it was better to stick with a proven loser than switch to a proven winner (G-36).

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The last time I saw Dr. J he didn't like the sound of my heart and Nancy drew blood and did a 12 lead EKG. He also told me to cut my Diovan in half because my blood pressure was 100/70. I told him that was one heck of a reward for reducing my salt intake. He told me to make an appointment with Dr. Pad and get treadmill and an echocardiogram. I don't know if Sharon made the appointment or not, TSHTF shortly after. I did cut the Diovan to QD and started to take my blood pressure. It went back up and I returned to 160/12.5 BID.

That night I was talking to Derek when I began to shiver. At my age, a person should know what that means, you have a fever. I took 2 Tylenol ES and went to bed. When I stopped shivering, I got up, took 2 more Tylenol and had a bite of supper. Must have worked, I eventually started to sweat, indicating I'd broken the fever. He was in Flippin and: 1) wanted me to use Black Hills M262; and, 2) he suggested that new round, 6.8? I replied that the greatest distance I'd probably shoot was ~100 yards and asked if there was anything wrong with the M855 at 100 yards. He didn't think so, case closed.

Tell me, do you think I'm a bad person? The PRK gun laws are so stupid they're just asking you to break them. I've often thought it was nice of the PRK to list the guns you couldn't have; it gave me a shopping list. Get caught with one high capacity magazine and they'll seize it and probably fine you. Get caught with a box full and you get to meet the Aryan Brotherhood. What about the guy down in the Inland Empire with a few hundred thousand rounds of ammo and, gasp, 5 illegal rifles? He should have had a better fire extinguisher. A firearm doesn't fire itself; therefore it's the man behind the weapon who makes the decision. His real sin was owning enough gunpowder to reload lots of ammo.

Would you rather have a firearm and not need it, or need it and not have it?

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We concluded that 'they' had eliminated lots of the liberals for us when 'they' nuked LA, San Bernardino, San Diego and San Francisco. The true colors of the Antelope Valley began to surface in the winter after the war. Those colors were Red, White and Blue. It was more than apparent that when the state outlawed many weapons, they ended up in cases in the backs of closets. I often wondered what became of the weapons I sold; they were 100% illegal, now.

We were also short on improved flashhiders. Desperate to get some, I talked to Lance about the 4 he had. He'd never installed them on their 4 rifles and they were NIB (New in the box). I offered to buy them from him and could see the relief in his face when we exchanges pictures of Ben Franklin for those 4 boxes. We made short work of getting them installed on the rifles and had one spare. Now all we'd need would be one more rifle and a few mores cases of 5.56.

It was a long winter and we had more snow than all of the 50 previous years combined. I know we had snow when I was at Edwards, but I can't tell you which year that was. The military, in the past, counted on the snow and rain to keep the dry lakebed smooth. In the spring, the wind would blow the water back and forth across the lakebed and then dry off, leaving a smooth flat bed.

When it finally stopped snowing, we planted onions, tomatoes, and peppers in the greenhouse so we had starts when it was time to plant the garden. Over the course of the winter, electricity had been restored. I also ran out of kerosene for the Heat Mate and had to use JP-8. Primarily because of the snow and secondarily because of the presence of the military, we hadn't had a chance to do much strategic reallocation. We had started to run low on prescription medications, we needed to do something.

"I can get out now, need anything?"

"Damon, you have no idea. I need 1 each AR-15, about 10 cases of ammo, and all of our prescriptions refilled. If you can find any seeds, we'll plant them, whether they're heirloom or hybrid. We need to top off the fuel tanks too. If you can find a few generators, we'll take them for the next time."

"What next time?"

"You mean I didn't tell you? Damon, bad things happen in threes. With the winter we've had, I'd expect we'll have a nuclear summer, you know about those, right?"

"Yeah it gets hot due to the greenhouse effect."

"It should get hot enough that Derek will wish he was back in Iraq, during the summer. We're also going to need garden netting to protect the plants from the UV-B. Add the correct sunglasses to protect our eyes from UV-B."

"Hey, no problem, that has been regulated by the FDA since 1998. They all block 99% of UVA, UVB and UVC."

"We'll need sunscreen too."

"I'll get some SPF-30, it hasn't been shown that anything over 30 provides addition protection."

"We'll probably have a UV Index of 11+ all summer. The UV Index provides a daily forecast of the expected risk of overexposure to the sun. The Index predicts UV intensity levels on a scale of 1 to 11+, where 1 indicates a low risk of overexposure and 11+ signifies an extreme risk. Calculated on a next-day basis for every ZIP Code across the United States, the UV Index takes into account clouds and other local conditions that affect the amount of UV radiation reaching the ground in different parts of the country. The index ranges are: 2 or less – low; 2 to 5 – moderate; 6 to 8 – high; 8 to 10 very high and 11+ extreme. You should do most of your shopping after dark."

"Worried I'll get sunburned?"

"No, I'm worried you'll get caught."

"You're not going to give me money to go shopping?"

"In a word, no."

The problem was that the system the government set up so we could check on the UV Index was internet based. Unless we could get an UV Index from one of the local radio stations, we'd have to assume it was 11+.

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Maybe I am a bad man, I sent my kid shopping, at night, with no money. Maybe he can find me a Ruger Mk III. It the latest of the Rugers and I wouldn't mind having one. I don't know what I use it for, but I wouldn't mind having one. I never acquired the .22 rifle either; it was too far down on my priority list. The 10/22 is a fine rifle, but I sure hate that rotary magazine. I know because I once owned one. I never owned a Colt Woodsman because if I did, I'd still have it. We had a Marlin 39A when I was growing up, I have no idea what ever happened to it. Come to think of it, I didn't like that rifle, either. I liked my Winchester 9422, that was a nice rifle and I regret selling it. Maybe I should have him look for one.

We'd been spending money like a drunken sailor on shore leave. Clarence didn't have the means to repay us at the moment and those 454 pictures of Ben Franklin had disappeared at a rather astounding rate. They weren't all gone, but I doubted there were enough left to buy everything we needed. It was time to begin reallocating the available resources. I needed Derek to the point that he submitted a requisition for LAWs rockets, primarily used by the USMC.

A Ma Deuce with spare barrels took longer and all we got was that heavy tripod mount. I don't remember but I think it goes about 128#. Add some ammo to get up to the total weight of 173#. The M240Bs were even harder to get, primarily because the barrels were set up with the head spacing done at depot or armory level. Derek had a problem of getting more than one spare barrel for each M240B. Ultimately, he got 3 spares for each of the two M240Bs he loaned us.

Meanwhile our 'Moonlight Auto Supply' was working. Damon prioritized what we needed and went for the meds first, getting them for everyone in Moon Shadows and the ones Ron and Linda needed. Next came staples, sometimes wheat, corn or oats aka live-stock feed. You can make your own maple syrup the same way Aunt Jemima does, add maple flavoring to a sugar syrup, but he got the real thing and more of the large mixes. Costco? Finally he located generators and fuel to power them. I believe that it will eventually come down to strategic reallocation (looting) because most people will be caught up short and simply won't have the money to continue buying what they need.

Bartering will only work if you have a large supply of essential trade goods. What will be considered essential? Food, fuel, weapons and ammunition, hardware, durable goods and probably clothing. Moreover things in high demand would probably demand high prices. That could range from over the counter pharmaceuticals to prescription drugs. If you thought ahead and could afford it, you might be set for life.

The state of Kalifornia tried to institute rules against hoarding. Someone forgot about the 4th Amendment in the process and when they came to Moon Shadows inquiring about food, we told them we didn't have any. They wanted to look, resulting in a confrontation. There are very few cases where they can do a warrant less search and this wasn't one of them. The inspector backed down when he realized he was out gunned. He claimed, "I'll be back." Right in about 5 years, he had one hell of a sunburn.

Most of the time, we got up before sunrise to work outside. In a nuclear war, there are several ways a person can die: melted by the blast and fireball, radiation poisoning, starve to death from a lack of food, die of disease from drinking tainted water, freeze to death during the nuclear winter or get burned up by UVB radiation during the nuclear summer. Plus, if you do happen to be prepared, you could end up getting shot by someone who isn't, to get what you have. That's why firearms and ammunition are an essential part of your preparations. That said, I should hasten to point out that mere presence of a firearm won't be enough, you have to know how to use it and use it well.

Most searches occur without warrants being issued. Over the years, the courts have defined a number of situations in which a search warrant is not necessary, either because the search is per se reasonable under the circumstances or because, due to a lack of a reasonable expectation of privacy, the Fourth Amendment doesn't apply at all.

1. If the person in control of the premises freely and voluntarily agrees to the search, the search is valid and whatever the officers find is admissible in evidence. Police officers do not have to warn people that they have a right to refuse consent to a search. If a police officer wrangles consent through trickery or coercion, the consent does not validate the search.

2. Police officers do not need a warrant to search and seize contraband or evidence that is "in plain view" if the officer has a right to be where the evidence or contraband is first spotted.

3. Police officers do not need a warrant to make a search "incident to an arrest." After an arrest, police officers have the right to protect themselves by searching for weapons and to protect the legal case against the suspect by searching for evidence that the suspect might try to destroy.

4. As a general rule, the police are authorized to make a warrantless search when the time it would take to get a warrant would jeopardize public safety or lead to the loss of important evidence. Examples:

a. An officer checks an injured motorist for possible injuries following a collision and finds illegal drugs.

b. Following a street drug arrest, an officer enters the house after the suspect shouts into the house, "Eddie, quick, flush it!" The officer arrests Eddie and seizes the stash.

c. A police officer on routine patrol hears shouts and screams coming from a residence, rushes in, and arrests a suspect for spousal abuse.

5. Cars may be searched without a warrant whenever the car has been validly stopped and the police have probable cause to believe the car contains contraband or evidence.

My TI in basic told me to never volunteer. It was good advice and I still follow it. We rigged shade for the garden so the plants wouldn't burn up in the high UV radiation. I could tell you Carl Sagan was right, and you might get the point. However, Carl Sagan was dead and there were probably some who didn't know who he was or anything about nuclear winter and nuclear summer. Not everyone spent his/her time watching the Discovery Channel and the History Channel. Watching Survivor Fiji was only entertainment, not particularly educational.

WW III is the type of disaster that just compounds itself. Even if a person survives the initial attack, like we did, he/she runs the risk of getting cancer by leaving the shelter too early. Once out of the shelter, he/she must reestablish the basic necessities, often listed as food, clothing and shelter, but I'll add security and health care. Shelter includes more than a roof; it considers a source of water and a source of heat. One could easily group water with food; you can last 3 days without water and 3 weeks without food. If you've stored frozen food, you need a source of power, during and after.

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Refined fuels were becoming harder to find, but not impossible. We had an advantage, we had large stores of PRI-G and PRI-D. It would restore seriously degraded refined fuels and we could take what others would pass on because it was unusable. As much as I hype their products, I should get a commission.

I had several of the survival websites that I visited regularly when we still had the internet. I won't list them because someone might think they're competing sites. From many came one unified survival plan. It wasn't perfect, nothing ever is. But, I/we learned, buy what you eat and eat what you buy. When selecting weapons, get those that you can find ammo for if TSHTF. If you find one brand of ammo or a particular cartridge that works extremely well in your MBR, buy plenty. Even if you can only afford to buy a few rounds at a time, it will add up. Ron bought 1 50-round box of Remington 5.56×45mm every time they went to Wal-Mart and ended up with 30 boxes. I wouldn't have stopped, but he planned to reload.

This time I tilled and Clarence hoed. I didn't have to till so deep now that all I was doing was knocking down weeds. Because of the very high heat, that before sunrise time kept getting earlier and earlier. By July, we were getting up around 8pm and going to bed around 8am. The only way we could sleep was to hang blackout shades on all of the windows. On those occasions where we had to be up during the daylight, we coated ourselves well with sun block, wore shades and wide brimmed hats. We also wore long sleeved shirts and they were hot. All the heat reminded me of the time I went to Phoenix in July wearing winter clothes and the coolest it got was 97° at night. That thinned my blood out very well making me accustomed to California weather. I also ended up with a newer lightweight wardrobe and I froze my behind when I went back to Iowa in the winter.

Two gross of jars wouldn't begin to hold the amount of food the shaded gardens provided. Conversely, 2 gross of jars would hold all the food we could eat in a year and then some. We opened a stand selling fresh produce right in front of the roadblock. That's why we had to put in some daylight hours, to sell or trade off the produce. We offered to trade produce for jars or lids but only genuine Mason jars made by Ball or Kerr. We would accept fuel too, but very little was offered. The sign also said we'd take 7.62×51mm NATO, 5.56×45mm NATO, .45ACP and 9mm. The only offer we got was some guy who had some Wolf ammo. We passed.

I once had a friend who had melanoma. It metastasized and spread to her lungs. According to WebMD, that mean the melanoma was in stage IV. Basal cell carcinoma is the most common type of skin cancer. It usually occurs on areas of the skin that have been in the sun, most often the nose. Often this cancer appears as a small raised bump that has a smooth, pearly appearance. Another type looks like a scar and is flat and firm to the touch. Basal cell carcinoma may spread to tissues around the cancer, but it usually does not spread to other parts of the body.

Squamous cell carcinoma occurs on areas of the skin that have been in the sun, such as the ears, lower lip, and the back of the hands. Squamous cell carcinoma may also appear on areas of the skin that have been burned or exposed to chemicals or radiation. Often this cancer appears as a firm red bump. Sometimes the tumor may feel scaly or bleed or develop a crust. Squamous cell tumors may spread to nearby lymph nodes.

Actinic keratosis is a skin condition that is not cancer, but sometimes changes into squamous cell carcinoma. It usually occurs in areas that have been exposed to the sun, such as the face, the back of the hands, and the lower lip. It appears as rough, red, pink, or brown, raised, scaly patches on the skin, or cracking or peeling of the lower lip that is not helped by lip balm or petroleum jelly.

The article also defined cancer stages:

In stage 0, cancer is found only in the epidermis (topmost layer of the skin), in the layer of cells in which the cancer began. Stage 0 cancer is also called carcinoma in situ.

In stage I, the tumor is 2 centimeters or smaller.

In stage II, the tumor is larger than 2 centimeters.

In stage III, cancer has spread below the skin to cartilage, muscle, or bone and/or to nearby lymph nodes, but not to other parts of the body.

In stage IV, cancer has spread to other parts of the body.

We were all concerned that that bright sunlight would give us cancer. We didn't give much thought to the fact that we'd exposed ourselves to more fallout than was healthy. I don't know, but I'd assume that if we got some kind of cancer other than melanoma, it would be due to our leaving the shelter while the radiation level was above 50mR/hr. If you've read my work, I say it's 'safe' to leave at 104mR/hr., but you really shouldn't leave before it's down to 50mR/hr. If you have food, water and power, why leave? If you leave early to save your property, it could cost you your life.

This time we didn't risk a trip to Fresno to get that Dragon Skin body armor. Although that may have been a wise choice, we had things to keep people far enough away from us to hopefully not need it. We had Mother Deuce and her twin sons, M240Bs. We had hand grenades early on and just last week got 2 wood cartons of LAW rockets. They come 5 to the case, 3 cases to the box. They were the latest generation, made for the USMC to use in Iraq. I don't know why Derek never gave us any M203s or 40mm grenades.

"Selling much?"

"Hey partner, sit yourself down and rest, it awful hot out in this sun."

"I've got a pith helmet."

"We wore those in basic training and called them piss helmets. Charlie wore them in Vietnam."

"I don't care, it keeps the sun off."

"At least you're carrying a real rifle instead of the poodle shooter."

"I don't have an AR-15."

"I was referring to that SU-16 you have. I know you don't have an AR-15."

"Same difference."

"How can you say that, Ron?"

"It uses the same magazines."

"Ron, that like calling a Montgomery Ward catalog toilet paper. How is your garden doing?"

"I thought you were nuts insisting I put up garden netting. I was wrong, I'll give you that."

"Thanks, but you didn't answer my question."

"What did you ask?"

"How is your garden doing?"

"Great. You don't have any extra jars, do you?"

"We've traded for a few, how many do you need?"

"About a gross."

"We haven't traded for that many, but I can let you have 6 dozen."

"Do you have lids and rings?"

"Don't you?"

"I don't even have a canner."

"Do you know how to use a cold pack canner?"

"Nope."

"Use a Water Bath Canner or Steam Canner for canning high acid foods such as fruits, jams & jellies. High acid foods can be safely processed at temperatures reached in the boiling water-bath or steam canners. To kill harmful molds, yeasts, and some bacteria, processing using the boiling water bath or steam methods ensures the safety of the

preserved produce. Foods such as fruits, pickles, sauerkraut, jams, jellies, marmalades, and fruit butters/spreads fit into the high acid group since they have an acidity, or pH level, of 4.6 or lower. Most tomatoes and tomato products also fit into this category provided current recommendations for acidification are followed. Most everyone uses pressure canners these days."

"Do you have a spare?"

"No, but you can bring your produce over here and use our pressure canner when we've finished for the day."

"Do you can every day?"

"Not usually. We can every third day and Clarence and Shirley can the next day. Do you want to can on the third day?"

"Do I have a choice?"

"Not if you want to use the pressure canner, no. Sharon claimed she could never remember using the pressure canner back in Davenport, but why else would we have one?"

"Does it work?"

"We had to replace the gasket, but yes, it works. My mother canned everything using a water bath canner, but I think you'd need the Ball Blue Book for information on how to do that."

"Where would I find one?"

"Try the library. You could use Amy's copier to copy the pages you need."

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Not that it's important, but when I checked the shed more carefully, I found both Coleman stoves, 1 pressure canner and 2 cold pack (water bath) canners along with one jug of kerosene and the Coleman fuel. Lorrie and David had taken the Coleman Lanterns. And since everyone knows how much I dislike the 5.56×45mm, the reason I ended up with 4 is: 1) I got the first one for \$300 including 7 magazines; and, 2) Some of the grandchildren wanted 5.56×45mm rifles so I got more.

Life was changing so fast we couldn't keep up. Real life in the days and weeks after was a major challenge.

You Can Run – Chapter 10

The younger kids were up in arms over our switching to a nighttime schedule. Erica took the task of home schooling the little kids, the older kids would have to learn their lessons in the School of Hard Knocks. When we finally located a good location to shoot, about a mile north of here on 50th Street East, we'd spent some late evening hours just before sunset, teaching gun handling safety and shooting to David's two boys and Aaron and Eric. We had two leftover AR-15s and no leftover M1As because Clarence was using my spare. That left us one rifle short so Aaron and Eric had to share Aaron's rifle.

The California Law that banned Assault Weapons and high capacity magazines went into effect at the turn of the Century. You were allowed to keep any high capacity magazines you already had, they were mostly after the guns. If you bought pre-ban magazines, referring to the '94' AWB, There was no way anyone could prove you hadn't owned the magazines before 2000. The T-57s don't say, 'Made in Taiwan'. Plus, the M1As were California legal, lacking a flashhider, bayonet lug and a pistol grip.

Damon was doing well with acquiring things we needed, so I added a few things to his list: Loaded M1As, CA legal AR-15s, high capacity magazines (LEO), 7.62 and 5.56 NATO ammo, improved flashhidiers in both calibers plus accessories. By now, he was making trips down below (to LA). He had a list of addresses where he might find things we could use. It included Big Five stores, Turner's Outdoorsman stores, Surefire in Fountain Valley and a few other stores I knew about. I told him he'd probably have better luck in Orange County.

He pulled it off by going in the daylight. Most people quickly learned, after getting a bad sunburn in only minutes, to stay inside during the day. He pretty much covered up head to toe and took advantage of people being inside. Working his way down the list, he had us set up with probably a 5 year supply of drugs, multiple pickup loads of staples, 3 tankers full of fuel and so forth. When he'd locate a tanker, he'd take Aaron with him the next day and they'd both shop. When the pickup was full, they'd go to the tanker's location, get it started using fresh fuel and spare batteries and return home.

He'd located some used M1As at Turner's and some new rifles after going to several places in Orange Valley. One dealer had an M-25 White Feather on display. That got put up so I could trade it to Derek for the Loaded I'd given him. I was most specific, if he found Glock's, they were his, to use as trade goods. Kimbers in .45ACP we'd put up for our own use. Browning Hi-Power's in 9mm would be our Ladies' guns. I told him to search until he found a LEO supplier and make sure his pickup was empty when he did. By August he had to quit, it was too hot for anyone to be out in the daylight for an extended period. He did find some Mirro and Presto pressure canners, jars and lids. Not much in any one place, but it did add up.

One of his primary sources was grocery warehouses. They'd been looted and most of the canned goods were missing. Some staples must have escaped the previous looters' attention and he got those. They were also the source of his canning jars and lids. The

staples were usually in poorly identified boxes with only a number on it. He did what they failed to do, looked inside. Much of it was generic products, but staples are staples. I can tell you that many of the looters were native Californians, all the Yuban Columbian and Hills Bros. coffee was missing.

Stores that were members only had the best of the situation. Costco and Sam's Club were good examples. First, they could limit purchases like other stores, think rationing; second, they had a secure customer base and dealt with people who frequently purchased in large quantities. We had 3 Costco stores in the area, the closed store in Santa Clarita, the Lancaster store on Avenue L and the Palmdale store, just a few blocks away. The Sam's Club was on 10th Street West, just north of the Mall.

Damon hit the Costco store in Santa Clarita on one of his first trips. The store was locked up tight and had been since the war started. He told me he had to break in and went for the most valuable things first, expecting once the place was open, anyone in the area would find it and clean it out. A Costco store must hold a trainload of goods, maybe more. He cleaned out the prescriptions drugs on his first trip, over the counter meds on his second trip and started in on the staples with his third, bringing home nearly 6 pallets of coffee.

On the second day, he got all the rice he could find on his first trip, beans on his second trip and both flour and sugar on his third trip. On the third day, he took both Aaron and Eric to help and they pulled a trailer. They finished off the flour and sugar and added packaged baking products, on the first trip. The next two trips were canned vegetables and fruit. He said he couldn't get everything because he couldn't get the forklift to work and couldn't get the pallets stacked on top. Chris said he'd go along the next day and see what he could do with the forklift. He could use his 5kw generator in his truck and his battery charger to recharge the battery on the electric powered forklift. Provided, someone would cover his six.

"Clarence, want to take a trip to Santa Clarita tomorrow?"

"Maybe, what for?"

"Damon has been emptying out the Costco store. He can't get the forklift to work and Chris says he'll take his generator and battery charger to recharge the battery if someone will cover his six."

"Inside work?"

"Well yeah, we'll just be guarding the entrance that Damon's using."

"Just the two of us?"

"Damon has gone down 6 times by himself and 3 times with just his boys. We can take our M1As, handguns and maybe some of those M67s."

"Why no rockets? I ain't gonna go if we ain't got some serious firepower."

"Would 6 LAWs be enough?"

"I'll go."

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Frankly, no one had shown up since Damon had opened the place back up. He was careful to chain the door shut, but claimed it didn't appear anyone was aware that he'd been there. A pickup load at a time, even with Dave's small trailer, it might take him months to empty the store of the things we could use. We could probably use at least 3-4 semi loads from the store. Unless they'd sold out of gensets before the war, we could get those. They carry automotive products and we could use those and all of the food items that weren't spoiled.

If we got something we couldn't use, it could go on the trade table in front of the road-block. I knew Chris wouldn't turn down a few bundles of grease rags and if the generators they had in stock were large enough, he'd take one for backup power, regardless of which kind of fuel it used.

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"You ready?"

"Who is going to cover my back?"

"Clarence and I will. Do you want my spare AR-15, just in case?"

"I, uh, well, ok."

"You'll be able to pick some things for your garage while the battery is being charged."

"Like what?"

"Auto supplies, tires, oil if they have any, a larger compressor if you want one and anything else you see. If they have any large generators, you might want to get one of those."

Most of the Costco stores had at least one of the Onan Residential Standby generators in stock so people could see what they were buying. Because the Onan HomeSite portables were not CAL approved, they generally had another brand of portable generator. When we got ours, they had the PowerBOSS 7kw, but you never really knew what they'd have if you only shopped once a month. Chris grabbed the demo model, a 12kw natural gas/propane fuel generator. I had the installation manual on my computer with

instructions for converting the generator from natural gas to LP vapor. He also grabbed a new battery because the demo model didn't have one. We helped him load his booty.

The thing that didn't make a lot of sense was that the store set there for months, untouched. Between what they loaded in the pickup and trailer and what we loaded on Chris pickup and car trailer, we'd managed to clean out all the generators, car supplies and much of the packaged food. I thought we'd do much better if we could find a semi-tractor and trailer, now that the fork lifts were working.

Damon came up with 2 running semis with 40' boxes. Mary can drive a semi as good as or better than Damon. I suggested they pack 'em full, the weigh stations were closed. He suggested that Clarence and I provide cover while they loaded the semis. We still had everything out from that day and Clarence said, "Why not?"

The goods, and there were a lot, were stacked in the unoccupied homes. Most of their garages were empty and we filled them up. The nightmare would begin once we had everything we wanted from the store. Someone had to inventory our ill-gotten gains. The following day we got two semi loads and planned to take a day off to unload the goods and store them. One forklift was loaded in Mary's truck to speed the process. We worked into the night unloading and storing our haul.

After a few hours of sleep, we lathered on the sun block and headed out for one more trip. When we arrived, there were several vehicles and people at the store. Damon never stopped, he turned the corner onto Sierra Highway and headed back to Palmdale.

"Good thing we got things according to their priority, Dad."

"It was good while it lasted. We have enough smokes to last the rest of our lives."

"You should take some of those up to the Armory, if you shared with the CNG, it might have hidden benefits."

"I don't know anyone who smokes Winston's or Salem's. We have about 6 cases of those, I'll talk to Derek."

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This time Derek's rank insignia had a star in the center, he was now an E-9, a Sergeant Major. He told me they'd smoke most anything so we gave him all off the off brands. Ron got the Camels, Clarence took Marlboros and I got the Kool's. We kept back the extra Marlboros because they were the universal brand that everyone could smoke. Our luck seemed to be running full blast, would it last?

For the moment, at least, we were reaping bounties, a communications sergeant managed to get to the smokes first and got several cartons of his favorite brand, Newport's. He showed up the next day with a SINGARS radio, power supply and base antenna.

He programmed the radio for the frequencies the CNG was currently using and gave me a CD and a card that listed scheduled frequency changes. I think I recognized him, but couldn't remember where he worked when he wasn't on duty. Then, it came to me, he worked for the guy who sold the Motorola business radios, Frank's Radio Service.

"I don't suppose Frank has any of the old Radius 50s, does he?"

"The crystal radios?"

"Yeah, we have 3 that I bought for the racing team, but we could use more."

"UHF or VHF?"

"VHF."

"He probably has a couple of dozen of them, nobody uses them anymore."

"Do you think he'd put new crystals in and sell them?"

"He died from the fallout. I can get them and re-crystal them for you if you give me the frequencies. I'll have to charge you \$50 apiece."

"You need money up front?"

"No, just the frequencies."

"I don't remember the frequencies, it's been a long time."

"Do you have a scanner?"

"Sure."

"Get a scanner and a radio and we'll get the frequencies. Wouldn't you rather have newer radios?"

"For \$50?"

"Not hardly."

"No, we've been spending money like a sailor on shore leave. I have enough to buy up to 30 radios at \$50 each."

"Cash?"

"You bet."

"Give me the frequencies and a week and I'll bring them by."

"You have a deal. We do have a few CM300s that we use as base stations."

"I can service them if they break down."

"I'll remember that; let me get you the two frequencies."

"Do you need headsets?"

"If you have them; I don't have much money to pay for them."

"I'll take food if you can spare some; I have a wife and 2 kids to take care of."

"I'll put together some food for you, would you take food for the radios?"

"Depends on what you have."

"Beans, rice, coffee, flour, sugar, Crisco, baking mixes and canned fruit and vegetables."

"Have enough to feed a family of 4 for a year?"

"I think we can manage."

"I'll trade you anything you want for the food."

"Ok, you get me all the handheld radios he has and a couple of CM300's with antennas and power supplies and I'll even throw in more smokes."

"Deal."

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"Sharon, could you help me?"

"What do you need?"

"I made a deal for radios. Payment will be a one year supply of food for a family of 4."

"What did you offer?"

"Beans, rice, coffee, flour, sugar, Crisco, baking mixes and canned fruit and vegetables."

"I'd say 350# of flour, 80# of sugar, a large can of baking powder and a large box of baking soda. I'd give them 150# of beans and the same of rice. Let's say 2 cases of coffee, give them the Starbucks, 3 cans of Crisco, 6 bags of pancake mix, 2 bags of brownie mix, and 6 cases each of green beans and corn. I'll throw in some miscellaneous veggies and some fruit. They'll need a couple of jars of yeast, a large bottle of brown gravy mix, a..."

"Whoa, wait a minute. I'll get a cart and follow you around. It will give me a good idea of where things are when we do the inventory. We'll store all the food in one pile in a garage somewhere."

"When do you want to do it?"

"Tomorrow?"

"That's fine; we'll start early and try to avoid the heat."

I noticed the next day she included a lot of the things she didn't like. I hope they like Dennison's chili. She added Spam, beef stew, canned chicken, tuna, canned roast beef, coffee filters, toilet paper, paper towels plus a lot of other things. We were basically trading a ton of food for about a dozen hand held radios and a few base stations. Everything she set out came from Costco in Santa Clarita.

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Four days later, he was back with more radios than we could use (30). When he left, his pickup couldn't hold any more. I gave him the last 16 cartons of Newport's and he gave me a large roll of RG-8 and a box of connectors so we could connect the antennas to the CM300s. The job of installing the connectors fell to our ET, Damon. By the time we were done, the 5 long term residents and Ron and Clarence had base stations and everyone who was working tract security had a handheld. Our privacy switches were set to A and D however, scanners ignore the privacy settings.

The next time I saw Derek that star was wrapped in what looked like a wreath.

"What now?"

"What do you mean?"

"The wreath around your star."

"Oh that, Command Sergeant Major. That about as high as I can go without being made a Warrant Officer."

"What about things like time in grade?"

"The Sergeant Major had radioactive poisoning and died so I got his spot. The Command Sergeant Major got transferred and they needed a replacement. I had the most time in service and the Lt. Col. decided I should be the Brevet Command Sergeant Major. If it works out, the rank will become permanent. I sent a communications sergeant over to see you, did he show up?"

"Do we have you to thank for the SINCGARS?"

"It's still the Army's radio, that's how we can keep it up to date with the latest frequency hopping data. What did you do, give him more cigarettes for the radio? If he asked you for more to install it, I'll..."

"Wait. His civilian job was working for Franks Radio Service on 12th St. West. I traded him a years' worth of food for a family of 4 to get more of those old Radius radios. He changed the crystals so all of our handheld radios use the same 2 frequencies. I threw in the smokes, he didn't ask for them."

"Good, we were thinking of promoting him to Staff Sergeant, I just needed to check."

"Rank is coming easily these days?"

"Company B lost a fair number of their noncoms. I don't know how they're doing it, but I am being paid. How are things here? Mary said you guys cleaned out a store in Santa Clarita?"

"Yeah, a Costco store that had been locked up since the war. It's a shame they don't sell ammo."

"You got a fair amount of food, I heard."

"We did do that plus several generators, auto supplies and so forth. What brand do you smoke Marlboros?"

"Yes, you have some?"

"A couple of cases worth. Damon can tell where he stored them. You guys need anything at the armory?"

"We could use some coffee."

"Starbucks ok?"

"You don't like it?"

"That's some awful coffee, I rather drink Yuban Columbian and I hate that."

"Anything you need?"

"Yeah, 7.62x51mm, 5.56x45mm, M61s if you can get them, another Ma Deuce might be nice and a pair of M240s. I'll take M136 AT4s or more LAWs rockets. Most importantly, I need two AN/PVS-27 Magnum Universal Night Sights."

"You need belted or ammo on stripers?"

"Yes."

"Anything else?"

"Have any AR-15s?"

"We don't use them. We have extra M-16A2s. They're used, we got new M-4s from Ft. Irwin. No promises, but I'll see what I can do."

"I want the Loaded M1A rifle back."

"Why?"

"Damon found you an M-25 down in Orange County. It was complete with scope and bipod. You can keep the 20 round magazines I gave you."

"You put the Tac-50 in our house, aren't you going to use it?"

"When you're here, you're our designated sniper. I can't carry that Tac-50 as much as I like it. Don't have the strength anymore."

"Are you sick?"

"No, just getting old. Besides the deal was you get my rifles and handguns and Damon gets my shotguns when I die."

"I'll give you the magazines back; I can get more from MCLB, Barstow."

"Can you get just a few or many?"

"As many as I want, why? Oh, you want more of those too?"

"I wouldn't turn them down, Damon found several M1As."

"You'll be fighting a set piece battle; I suppose the M1As would be your preferred choice?"

"Yes and if we had M-16s, we could use those if we were heavily outnumbered. We can call the Armory on the radio you provided and the Sheriff on channel 9. Thing is, we have to hold off everybody until you get here."

"Most of the troops aren't at the Armory, so it would be the Sheriff first and us last. How did the garden do?"

"Between that and Costco, we have a lot of food. You can take anything you need for your troops."

"We have roadblocks set up to protect Palmdale. Damon let me know and that's why you guys got down the highway as easily as you did. Anyone who survived the attack in LA has gotten out by now or died."

"Have you been federalized?"

"The Governor never heard from NCA. The Adjutant General is commanding both the Guard and the State Military Reserve. They've managed to activate about half of each force."

"Osama and Biden get killed?"

"Nobody knows, we haven't heard from either one of them."

"They're acting about like I expected."

"Dad, we were lucky to get through the first winter and summer. We've gone from the most powerful nation in the world to a third world country with the most powerful military in the world. For some reason, they didn't hit Pearl Harbor and our Pacific Fleet is now totally based there. The rest of our fleet is operating out of New London."

"Have you been able to restore comms with the east coast?"

"Yes, with New London. Most of the major cities and military installations on the east coast were hit. Several major commands were hit around the country and they've been working hard to get those commands reorganized and operating. They lost a bunch of their equipment."

"They still have that National Guard on the border?"

"Don't need them; the Mexicans are headed south, not north."

You Can Run – Chapter 11

Freedom of religion is considered by many in Western nations to be a fundamental human right.

It is also a guarantee by a government for freedom of belief for individuals and freedom of worship for individuals and groups. Freedom of religion includes the freedom not to follow any religion and not to believe in any god.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the 58 Member States of the United Nations General Assembly on December 10, 1948, at the Palais de Chaillot in Paris, France defines freedom of religion and belief as follows:

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship, and observance.

Freedom of religion as a legal concept is related to but not identical with religious toleration, separation of Church and state, or laïcité. Religious toleration is the condition of accepting or permitting others' religious beliefs and practices which disagree with one's own.

In a country with a state religion, toleration means that the government permits religious practices of other sects besides the state religion, and does not persecute believers in other faiths. The state may or may not permit members of the state religion to convert to another, and if it does permit it, it may place various obstacles to such conversions. Historically, toleration has been a contentious issue within many religions as well as between one religion and another. At issue is not merely whether other faiths should be permitted, but also whether a ruler who is a believer may practice or permit tolerance. In the Middle Ages, toleration of Judaism was a contentious issue throughout Christendom. Today, there are concerns about the persecution of religious minorities in Islamic states and in atheistic states such as China and North Korea, as well as other forms of intolerance in other countries.

For individuals, religious toleration generally means an attitude of acceptance towards other people's religions. It does not mean that one views other religions as equally true; merely that others have the right to hold and practice their beliefs. Proselytism can be a contentious issue; it can be regarded as an offense against the validity of others' religions, or as an expression of one's own faith.

Historically freedom of religion has been used to refer to the tolerance of different theological systems of belief, while freedom of worship was defined as freedom of individual action. During history some countries have accepted some form of freedom of worship, though in actual practice that theoretical freedom was limited through punitive taxation, repressive social legislation, and political disenfranchisement. Compare examples of

individual freedom in Poland or the Muslim tradition of dhimmis, literally "protected individuals" professing an officially tolerated non-Muslim religion.

I am not a zealot. Religion is a personal matter to me. Nobody gets my religion stuffed down their throat. My name is Gary, not John, as in John the Baptist, a famous zealot. I won't let anyone except my minister preach to me about religion. This is between me and God. Don't go quoting Scripture to me just to prove some point. For example:

Genesis 1:20 says, "Then God said, 'Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let bird fly beneath the dome of the sky.' And so happened:"

Genesis 1:21 says, "God created the great sea monsters and all kinds of swimming creatures with which the water teems, and all kinds of winged birds. God saw how good it was,"

I still want to know which came first, the chicken or the egg. Genesis gives the Creationists' view, but who give the evolutionary view? Creation tells us who did it and evolution tells us how He did it.

◦

Philosophers have long debated whether the complexity of nature indicates the existence of a purposeful natural or supernatural designer/creator. The first recorded arguments for a natural designer come from Greek philosophy. In the 4th century BC, Plato posited a natural "demiurge" of supreme wisdom and intelligence as the creator of the cosmos in his work *Timaeus*. Aristotle also developed the idea of a natural creator of the cosmos, often called the "Prime Mover," in his work *Metaphysics*. In *De Natura Deorum*, or "On the Nature of the Gods" (45 BC), Cicero stated that "the divine power is to be found in a principle of reason which pervades the whole of nature."

The use of this line of reasoning as applied to a supernatural designer has come to be known as the teleological argument for the existence of God. The most notable forms of this argument were expressed in the 13th century by Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae*, design being the fifth of Aquinas' five proofs for God's existence, and by William Paley in his book *Natural Theology* (1802). Paley used the watchmaker analogy, which is still used in intelligent design arguments. In the early 19th century, such arguments led to the development of what was called natural theology, the study of biology as a search to understand "the mind of God." This movement fueled the passion for collecting fossils and other biological specimens that ultimately led to Darwin's theory of the origin of the species. Similar reasoning postulating a divine designer is embraced today by many believers in theistic evolution, who consider modern science and the theory of evolution to be fully compatible with the concept of a supernatural designer.

Intelligent design in the late 20th century can be seen as a modern development of natural theology which seeks to change the basis of science and undermine evolution theory. As evolutionary theory has expanded to explain more phenomena, the examples that

are held up as evidence of design have changed. But the essential argument remains the same: complex systems imply a designer. Examples offered in the past included the eye (optical system) and the feathered wing; current examples are mostly biochemical: protein functions, blood clotting, and bacterial flagella.

The earliest known version of the particular line of reasoning that would come to be called "intelligent design" began, according to Dr. Barbara Forrest, in the early 1980s with the publication of *The Mystery of Life's Origin* (MoLO 1984) by creationist chemist Charles B. Thaxton with Walter L. Bradley and Roger L. Olsen. Thaxton worked for Jon A. Buell at the Foundation for Thought and Ethics (FTE) in Texas, a religious organization that published MoLO."

Intelligent design deliberately does not try to identify or name the specific agent of creation – it merely states that one (or more) must exist. Although intelligent design itself does not name the designer, the personal view of many proponents is that the designer is the Christian God. Whether this was a genuine feature of the concept or just a posture taken to avoid alienating those who would separate religion from the teaching of science has been a matter of great debate between supporters and critics of intelligent design. The *Kitzmiller v. Dover Area School District* court ruling held the latter to be the case.

Is that what I believe? It's one theory that Fleataxi says explains me. The truth is only known by God and by me. I'll tell you this much, I am a Christian and I don't like to be preached to... Ever heard of the *Spaceman Theory of God*?

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How does that relate to WW III? Iran started the war by testing a nuclear device. Israel felt threatened and nuked them. It was all about religion, Islam vs. Judaism. I hadn't thought the Russians or Chinese would get involved, but the former built the reactor and the latter needed Iran's oil. Which is particularly interesting, both were Communist nations who didn't emphasize religion.

Anyway, we were well prepared for the next disaster, when it came. I had no idea what it could be, surely not another war. That left all of those natural disasters that could range from worldwide to local. My head wasn't clear enough to read my crystal ball so I just put it out of mind. Clarence and I had the afternoon watch at the barricade blocking the entrance. That was the safest tour of duty.

On that particular day, I took my shotgun and pistol, figuring that if we had any action, it would be up close and personal. Clarence had his M1A, offsetting my choice of weapons. It was a late fall day and had cooled down from the summer's high temperatures. Still plenty warm although not uncomfortable. We showed up just before noon and relieved Dick and Dave. They said it had been quiet. A patio table with an umbrella had been set up when it first warmed up. I laid my shotgun on the table and got out the ½ gallon

thermos of (frozen) lemonade. I filled our two glasses and we got to discussing the potential for another disaster.

"What do you think will happen, Clarence?"

"It would be easier to say what won't happen, Gar-ree. We won't get a tsunami this high up behind the mountains. We get whirlwinds, but I don't believe we get tornadoes. I haven't seen any new stars in the sky, so I think it's fair to eliminate a comet or asteroid."

"If an asteroid came from behind the sun, we might not notice it, Clarence."

"Well, I suppose that's always possible, but they move how fast, 7 miles per second or faster? That's 420 miles per minute or over 25,000 miles per hour, at minimum. Let's say 40,000 miles per hour. Light take about 8½ minutes to get here from the sun traveling at 300,000km per second. That's, uh, 510 seconds times 300,000, so the sun is about 153,000,000km or about 95 million miles. A rock would take about 2,400 hours to get here or about 99 days."

"You're doing the math faster than I can."

"I did it on a calculator and memorized it. Somebody would see it long before it got here."

"Fair enough, but how would they warn us?"

"I guess it would have to be by radio, I hadn't thought about that. But Derek should know if a rock was coming. He hasn't said anything, so let's eliminate that. That eliminates tsunamis, tornadoes or an asteroid impact. We don't get hurricanes, either. Even if a tropical cyclone somehow managed to hit the west coast, all we'd get would be a really bad storm. What's left Gar-ree?"

"Earthquake, Cascadia subducting and causing the Cascade Range to erupt, Long Valley or Yellowstone erupting as a Supervolcano. I don't see us getting a real flood and no landslide could affect us. We could have a drought or a blizzard, you know. We could also have a massive solar flare."

"A drought could lead to famine, but we have food for a couple of years and there's that greenhouse you built. Besides, we have water so we can irrigate. That leaves earthquakes and volcanoes."

"Clarence, we 40,000 years overdue on Yellowstone, Long Valley could erupt at any time and the Big One is overdue."

"Really? We can't control any of those things, so I suggest we not worry about it."

"What do you propose we do, Clarence?"

"Stay prepared, what else can we do?"

It was a dull shift except for that conversation. What we needed to do was find more people to move into the housing tract because there's security in numbers. I have to ask Derek if there were any survivalists in the people who moved up from LA. There were plenty of survivors, but that's not necessarily the same thing. We were looking for people who had bug-out vehicles that were well equipped. They had their own food and possibly a supply of fuel. Plus, they were able to protect themselves. The thing was I'd told everybody where we lived and you'd have thought they'd have looked us up. Most of the folks on the website were fundamentalist Christian, maybe they wouldn't look up a Methodist.

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I used double magazine pouches for my pistol only because they were cheap. Fleataxi seemed to think that single pouches were better, but he didn't have to pay for them. He could have been right, but my mags didn't hang up in the cheap surplus pouches. If anything, the pouches were a bit oversize. I also wondered if they got fallout up in the Elko area. It was east of Reno and northeast of Vegas. They could have nuked Vegas and maybe gotten a couple of million people. If they did, I hoped he found a shelter.

Whatever came next, we weren't looking forward to it, maybe we'd been beat up enough. I'd started writing about being prepared long before we actual were prepared. Thing is, there's no way anyone can be prepared enough. Would anyone invest in things like 4-5 gross of canning jars and put them up, just in case? Would you really buy LTS food like the stuff Walton Feed sells? The rule of thumb is buy what you eat and eat what you buy.

The lids have a shelf life and you either buy a special long life lid (Tattler) or replace them every once in a while. Unused lids will work well for at least five years from the date of manufacture. Older lids may fail to seal. Try to buy only the quantity of canning lids you can use in one year. Examine lids carefully before you use them. Don't use old, dented or deformed lids or lids with gaps or defects in the colored sealing gasket.

That piece of news put a crimp in our long term planning. We'd collected a fair number of used jars and even more new jars, thanks to Damon's efforts. The jars weren't the problem, the lids were. We had a 7-8 year supply, but would they still be good? Would someone start making more lids before the ones we had went bad? If not, was there something we could do to extend the life of the lids? National Manufacturing, the company that made Morris Home Canning Lids and Seals, apparently went out of business. Those lids had a shelf life of 10 years.

What happened next really threw us for a loop; we were invaded by a pack of feral dogs. Dave and Dick were on the entrance and shot 2 or 3 but they had rifles not shot-

guns. Clarence told me he stuck his head out the door and went back to get his 12 gauge. He called me on the radio and said, "We got a pack of wild dogs, get your shotgun, Gar-ree."

Crap, I had 00 Buck and slugs and no other size of shot. I'd have preferred to have #4 Buck or smaller. Remington Express #4 Buck has 27 pellets and Express Magnum #4 Buck has 41 pellets. Winchester had the same loading in their #4 Buck, but Federal had 34 pellets in their 2¾" shell. I loaded the shogun with what I had and crammed more shells in a pocket. I bolted out the door and headed towards the entrance. Just as I was about to turn the corner and head north, either Dave or Dick shot again. I stopped short, unwilling to get in their line of fire.

I stood there, shotgun in condition 0 and as the dogs came into view, opened up. I almost wished I had an 11-87 instead of a 590A1. I got 3 and Chris, standing in the door of his garage got 4. The lone survivor of the pack wasn't sure what to do or who to attack. Clarence got him with his shotgun as he came running up, stopped and got the dog in his sights.

I pulled out several shells and began reloading, just in case.

"Was that all of them?"

"We got 'em all," Dick replied.

"We need a fence and a gate across the entrance," Dave suggested.

"Actual I think we could do it with 3 gates," Dick replied. "One for the side walk and 2 for the road. That way, we'd only need to put in 2 gate posts."

They continued the discussion while Clarence I went to our house for coffee. Everyone got some part of that action and the dogs got dead. I wasn't about to get involved with them putting a gate across the front of the tract, but if they did, I'd deal with it. Clarence seemed to be of the same mind. I called Ron on the radio and invited him over for coffee and to get his input on the idea.

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"Hey partner, I see you got a pack of dogs, too."

"You got one?"

"Yeah, they came running down the street looking for something or someone to attack. Most of them won't do that again."

"You killed them?"

"Us and some of the neighbors. A few got away, though."

"Did you see the ones we shot?"

"Yeah, they weren't the same bunch."

"I don't get it, partner, it's been more than a year since the war."

"They may have been feeding on bodies for all we know."

"Ron, what do you think of the idea of gating in this housing tract?" Clarence asked.

"I guess it would be one solution. Would you keep the cars as a roadblock?"

"They didn't say Ronald. I think they should, a gate wouldn't really stop anyone if it was just a cyclone fence gate. I suppose if Chris could get enough heavy pipe, he could weld something together that might stop small vehicles, but not many gates would stop a heavy truck or something larger."

"Larger?"

"Like an Abrams tank, for example. They weigh over 60 tons and sheer momentum would put them through most gates. What with the Target parking lot to use to get up speed, anything heavy would punch right through a gate."

"Why would anyone want to?"

"I don't know, I was just saying it was possible."

"It might prevent you fellas from getting attacked by feral dogs again. Besides, don't the two of you have one shift on the entrance?"

"We do. I was planning on taking both my M1A and shotgun when we take over at noon."

"I'd like to see you hauling a M1A in one hand, a shotgun in the other hand plus your chest vest full of magazines and the 56 round bandoleer you bought to hold the shotgun shells. It would take you 15 minutes to walk the block to the front."

"No it won't, I'd take my wheelchair; the new battery is fully charged."

"Where did you get those bandoleers?"

"Brigade Quartermasters. Twenty bucks each. I have each one loaded with 40 rounds of buckshot and 16 rounds of slugs. I've got to get some of the Federal 34 pellet #4 Buck. We ought to run up to Sandy's and see if she has any."

"She doesn't, I bought her out. I'll trade you round for round for some of those Brenneke slugs."

"Fifty rounds?"

"I have that many in the car, hang on, I'll get them."

"Why are you trading off your slugs, Gar-ree?"

"Because I have enough rifles and don't really use many slugs."

Clarence left to get a bite of lunch before we reported to the front entrance for guard duty. Ron and I swapped shells and I took one of the bandoleers and replaced the 00 Buck with #4 Buck. I changed the loadings of my 590A1 to be 1 #4 followed by 1 00 followed by 1 slug. Then, I changed my mind and loaded the shotgun with nothing but #4 Buck, just in case we got more dogs.

"Ready to be relieved?"

"Yeah, real ready."

"What did you decide on the gate?"

"I know where we can get some 3" iron pipe and Chris agreed to weld it together. We'll cover it with a layer of cyclone (chain link) fence and to make the gates stronger, put a 6" pipe in the middle of the road. We decided to just chain the gates shut."

"Why don't you use 2 poles in the center, putting one behind the end of each gate?"

"I suppose we could, that would make the gates stronger. Can you lift the 6" pipe?"

"No, but Clarence and I might be able to lift a 3" pipe working together."

"We'll talk it over. Except for an occasional Sheriff's vehicle or Guard vehicle, it's been quiet since the dog attack."

Clarence and I sat down at the table, laid our weapons on it and I also took off the bandoleer, it was heavy. An hour or so later, Dave, Dick and Chris took off, apparently to get the pipe and some fencing. They hadn't returned by the time our shift ended. When I got home, I emptied and cleaned my shotgun, reloading it with #4 Buck.

I had discovered one thing; the saying that an armed society is a polite society was totally true. All the men, and most of the women, carried at least inside the housing tract.

If they left, they usually had a rifle or a shotgun to supplement that handgun. While most preferred semi-auto pistols, a few carried either a single or double action revolver.

◦

Time out.

I suppose because of all the stories I've written some people think that we're the most prepared couple in the US. We're not and no one can ever be totally prepared. How can you prepare for the bird flu, if your doctor won't write the Rx? Still, there is a lot you can do, regardless of where you live. You can buy the package from Shane Connor and extra KIO₃ from Medical Corps. You can stock your shelves with extra of the food you regularly eat. A small gasoline generator with some spare fuel will keep the freezer and refrigerator cold. You do have some oil lamps, right? Get a couple of jugs of kerosene for them and maybe some spare wicks. You can feed a family cooking on a Coleman stove and you should get the kind that will use unleaded gas so you can use some of your generator fuel.

The issue of weapons is very difficult, depending on where one lives. It shouldn't be that way, but it is, so deal with it. I consider the list of weapons banned by California to be one thing, a shopping list. The harder they work to ban firearms, the more I want them. The operative word is 'want'.

There are 2 aspects of survival and I think the most important is knowledge. The second is preparation and we're just like most people, doing it as fast as we can. It does no good to have a freezer full of meat if you don't have an alternative source of power and enough fuel to keep the meat frozen.

ATM, I'm 64 and disabled. If I had to, I could walk from here to downtown Palmdale, ~5 miles, carrying my M1A and my chest harness of magazines. It would take a while, but I'd get there, eventually. We have enough food on hand to get by for a while and our supply increases monthly. This used to be a nice 'small' town of 37,000. Now, it's 5 times that and I think they're mostly liberals. I'd leave in a minute, if I could, and move back to the US of A.

◦

I need to backup and explain something. I said Ronnie Barrett doesn't want suppressors on his rifles. That's a fact. That doesn't keep people from building suppressors that are intended for the Barrett rifles. Generally, a suppressor reduces the recoil of a firearm, but in the case of the M82A1, Barrett already eliminated much of the recoil with his fancy muzzle break. The Barrett Forum says:

The 82 series rifles are recoil operated. As with most recoil operated guns the sum of the parts is a very balanced system.

The weight of the recoiling mass, the rates of the various springs, the recoil energy provide by the firing of the cartridge, and the recoil that is mitigated by the tuned muzzle brake are all working in conjunction to achieve this balance.

When you remove the highly effective muzzle brake (greatly increasing the speed of the recoiling mass), and add a large suppressor to the barrel (greatly increasing the recoiling mass) bad things can happen to your formerly reliable gun.

I found nothing in the manual that I downloaded that discussed using a suppressor and I read all 33 pages very carefully. On the other hand: 1) I'd never call Ronnie Barrett a liar; and 2) I didn't buy a Barrett rifle. Therefore, the issue of using a suppressor on my Tac-50 was moot. McMillan sells the Elite Iron suppressor for the Tac-50.

We started out with 1,200 rounds of Mk 211 MP that cost me 6 grand. Derek had supplied many things, but he hadn't seen fit to supply any more Mk 211 MP. The rifle doesn't require major maintenance for 4,000 rounds according to my owner's manual and I wanted another 3,000 rounds of ammo. Why? Why not?

Despite having worked for the state of Iowa for 19 years, I didn't much care for government, especially the Kalifornia government. As far as that went, when the Iowa Department of Revenue tried to make me file Iowa tax returns, I got my CPA to set them straight. Intangible income is taxable to the recipient's state of residence, not the state where the trust is, unless they're both the same.

It took from when I ask until now for Derek to come through with the M16A2s, M61s, extra ammo and extra machines guns I asked for. It wasn't something a civilian should have and he had to talk fast with the Lt. Colonel to give the things to us. Then I hit him up for another 3,000-rounds of Mk 211 MP. He flung his hands in the air and stomped off. The only word I understood was, 'ungrateful'. I wasn't, but I had to ask. He didn't give us M136 AT4s, instead, he gave us another 2 cases of LAWs rockets. After I gave him the M-25, I thought perhaps ungrateful applied to him as well. Hell, I even installed a suppressor on the M-25. Where did I get it? From Damon, where else? He got them when he found the M1As.

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The next disaster had already begun and we didn't have a clue. I'll give you 2 clues, it wasn't the rock and 1,000mi³, was much larger than biggest one that happened before. They called the ash from that one the Huckleberry Ridge Tuff. The only thing that could have been worse than that was a huge asteroid hitting the Earth. It was probably worse than the TV program *Supervolcano*. It seems that the relationship between mi³ and km³ is about 4.17km³ per mi³.

You Can Run – Chapter 13

It appeared that winter was going to last about 10 years, maybe longer. Was a 10-year long volcanic winter followed by a 10-year long volcanic summer? I don't think so, it would probably slowly clear and slowly warm up during the summer months, but who knows for sure? I'll write it down and maybe someday, if anyone is interested, one of my kids or grandchildren will see about publishing it. If I had some of that low acid computer paper left, I could print it out and a future generation could read it. The paper I have will probably be yellow and brittle.

We had to carefully inventory everything we had and suggest that everyone in the tract do the same thing. We needed to know how much food was available, especially after the trip to Santa Clarita. We had to know who had weapons and who needed weapons. The same applied to ammo, a weapon without ammo was nothing but a club. We had to get someone to meet with the city and learn how long we'd be without power, gas, water and so forth. What would the volcanic ash do to the Palmdale Water District's wind turbine? What would the ash do to the wind turbines at Tehachapi, a source of additional power?

It was obvious that someone was doing something about the power before the eruption, they'd managed to restore it after the war. I further concluded that someone was controlling the reactors, Hoover Dam and Tehachapi. Hoover Dam was near Las Vegas and since it had survived the war, maybe it would survive the eruption.

I'm an accountant not an engineer, soldier, computer programmer or any of those technical specialties. Chris was a wire monkey (audio technician) for a TV show, Dick was employed by the gas company and Dave was a machinist down below before the war. I think he was getting close to retirement; he bought a motor home back in 2007. (Dick already had a motor home.) Lance was a retired security man who ran some company's security program at plant 42. Clarence was a retired LA County maintenance man and Ron last worked to AmeriGas.

Derek felt he had to report back to Company B at the Armory to see what they were going to do now that we'd had a Supervolcano. Damon was making lists like I liked to do and trying to decide whether he dared to go back to LA and do more shopping. I was in favor of it, provided he could do so safely. In this half twilight we had, he'd have to have some people covering his back, as in more than just Aaron.

"Damon has a list and wants to go to LA."

"So, what do you want me to do about it partner?"

"I thought maybe I could get Clarence and you to come with me to help cover his back."

"Did Derek get any of those M16A2s?"

"We have a few. We have some of those old M61 grenades too. The only thing we don't have that I wanted was M203s and some 40mm grenades. He did give us 2 more cases of LAWs rockets, though. If we decide we need to take a machine gun, I'd recommend a M240B. They're not too heavy to handle, the ammo is about medium weight and we have a lot of cans of 7.62mm belted. Find me 2 MUNS! Here's a printout so you'll know what look for. What do you plan to take?"

"The semi and the forklift. He still has a few places on his list that may or may not have been looted."

"It doesn't bother you that he's looting?"

"He's not looting, he's reallocating. Looting is taking things that don't support survival like TVs, stereos and so forth. All he's doing is reallocating unused food from LA to this housing tract and we've made it available to others. I would tend to think that weapons and ammo might be in the same category. We've taken what we could use and made the remainder available to others. He'll probably get around to the HRO store and we might get more ham radios. What I'd really like to have is enough propane, diesel, gasoline and motor oil to last us well past the electricity being restored."

"You obviously think this will last for a while."

"We aren't even over the changes the war made to the weather, Ronald. Ask yourself what putting about 1,000mi³ of ash and volcanic gases into the air will do. The eruption 2 million years ago put up about half of that but there wasn't anyone there to record the aftermath."

"Are we going to need night vision equipment? I don't have any, you know."

"I can talk to Derek about that, maybe he has some extra. I sure wish he had a MUNS for my Tac-50 and M1A."

"You going to lug that cannon?"

"Maybe. Chris welded up the pintle mount and I can use the Barrett soft mount on my wheelchair."

"You taking a machine gun?"

"I told you we might take the M240B, but Aaron will need help, it's a crew served weapon."

"What's that mean in English?"

"Someone has to carry his extra ammo."

"Are you going to pass out anti-tank weapons?"

"Clarence probably won't go unless I let him take LAWs. I'll get you an A2 and extra magazines."

"Why? I already have 20."

"Derek told me that two of his buddies in Iraq carried a whole backpack full of loaded magazines. Standard issue is 7 magazines and 210 rounds of ammo won't last long if we happen to get into a firefight."

"He hasn't had any trouble so far has he?"

"The only time we came close was when we made that last trip to Santa Clarita. That's not the point, never forget Murphy's Laws."

"Why don't you mount the M240 on your wheelchair and let Aaron carry the Tac-50?"

"Maybe I will, I've never fired a machine gun except once in practice. Are you in or out?"

"In, subject to my getting an A2."

Just between you and me, if I had to carry an M16, I'd opt for an A3. While you'd normally use it as a semi-auto, full-auto could come in handy if we went up against a large force of well-armed people. Let's face facts; there are several armories in the greater LA area. While we'd avoided people so far, how long would that last? We'd cleaned out anything we could use from the grocery warehouse in Brea and would be looking for a second warehouse. Of course, the big haul came from Costco and it's ok, I'm a member.

By the time I got everything organized and weapons, magazines and ammo issued as requested, I didn't know if I wanted to go or not. I hemmed and hawed over the M240B and decided to let Aaron take it and I stick with my cannon. Lucky me, I got to ride in back and guard the forklift. Because Damon hadn't said where he intended to start first, I had no idea where we were headed. It turned out to be a petroleum distribution facility and Mary would end up driving a double bottomed tanker containing 8,000 gallons each of gas and diesel back to Palmdale with Aaron riding shotgun.

"You 3 old guys will be my cover from now on."

"Where are you going?"

"First to get some PRI products to stabilize and/or restore the fuel. Then I thought we pick up some drums of oil and filters for the generators. I have one more stop I'd like to make to pick up some ammo and then we'll go to a grocery warehouse and see what we can find."

"You know where you're going?"

"Got the addresses and a Thomas book, I'll get there."

"Did Aaron take the machine gun?"

"No, he left it for Ron and Clarence. He showed them what they needed to know about loading it, clearing jams and changing barrels. The grocery warehouse is off the beaten path, we could get lucky."

"And, if we don't?"

"We'll go to the next one on my list. With only 4 of us, we have to avoid trouble. I brought Chris's generator and some stand lamps so we can see once we're inside the warehouse."

"Would it be nice if we could find a warehouse that hadn't been picked over?"

"Who says we won't? Remember that Costco store stood there for months unmolested. I thought we might check some out that were close to ground zero and see if they survived the blast."

"What about a distribution center for a Sam's Club?"

"I have it on the list."

"Wal-Mart too?"

"Oh yeah, Wal-Mart too."

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I didn't know that he'd packed food and water for an extended trip. By late in the day, we had the PRI products, additional ammo and some hunting rifles and handguns but no more food. When the truck came to a stop and the back door was opened, we were parked in a motel parking lot.

"What gives? I hungry."

"I brought some of those MREs that Derek gave us. I planned to spend the night and check more stores tomorrow. You look tired, why don't you take the first guard shift?"

"Ok, get this cannon off the pintle mount and put it in my room, I'll stick with my MBR. What kinds of meals are available?"

"I bought 2 cases, dig through them and find something you like."

"I sure could use a cuppa."

"Ok, I'll brew a pot."

I put my things in the room he picked out for me and pushed the soft chair out the door to take first shift. The meal I ended up with said, "Beef Stew". I'd have to take their word for that, it didn't appear to be Dinty Moore. Ron relieved me at eight and I washed up in the sink using cold water from a can and crawled in. The next thing I knew, Damon was waking me to tell me it was my turn again, we were pulling 3 hour shifts. I don't wear a watch and had no idea what time it was, but he was holding a mug of coffee so I dressed, pushed the chair back out of the door and sat down for my second turn on guard duty. Later, he came out and said, "Grab another MRE and we'll take off. There's water to use to flush the toilet."

The second MRE said, "Cheese & Veg Omelet" and, it almost was. When everyone was ready, I climbed back up into the trailer and we took off. This time, he struck pay dirt, the warehouse had only been partially looted. It would take 7-8 trips to empty it out if no one discovered it once we started.

Mary and Aaron filled our tanks and unloaded the remaining fuel into the tanks at the Chevron station at Palmdale Boulevard and 30th E. They went back for a second load of half and half. They continued until most of the fuel tanks in Palmdale were filled and then switched to a closed trailer so they could bring back drums of oil and hopefully filters for our generators. We made two trips a day and after replenishing our stocks, dropped the remaining food off at Albertson's and Stater Bros. at 47th St. E. and Avenue S.

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"That covers the food for a while, but what about more propane?"

"Gar-bear, we should be able to get more at the propane distribution station I worked at before I moved up to management. We'll have to find a propane tanker and haul it up here about 9,000-gallons at a time. If we can find 2 tankers, both Damon and Mary can haul it until all the tanks in town are filled."

"How much propane is stored at that location?"

"Maybe a half million gallons, if all the tanks are full. The 3 of us can stay there and they can haul about 3 loads of propane a day. It was delivered to that distribution location by train. My job, when I worked there, was to unload the rail cars and load the tank trucks. The thing is, until we check the place out, I have no idea how full the tanks are."

As I said, I had a lot of low friends in high places and they probably said the same thing about me, behind my back. The only thing we really lacked was a communications expert among the residents. To entertain myself, I once downloaded the owner's manual to the Kenwood TS-2000 and read it. Everyone in the tract had at least one computer and if we could have set up a high speed Ethernet network for the tract, we'd have probably been better off. Damon could get the equipment, but we needed a savvy technician to hook it up and make it work. When my brain died, I forgot how to do those things.

Of course, the tanks weren't all full. They were maybe $\frac{3}{4}$ full. Then we got to checking for rail cars and Lordy be, we found a train in San Berdoo that had several. We fooled around for a while trying to figure out how to make the train work, ergo, run the locomotive. Understand, that train had been sitting on a siding since the war and it was diesel electric so we figured we'd never get the diesel to run and produce the electricity to power the motor. PRI-D to the rescue, we finally got the engine running and low and behold, none of the wiring was burned out so the generator produced electricity and the wheels turned.

However, it was on a siding and there wasn't any power to the switches so we could get it off the siding and onto the mainline. Apparently my 7kw generator was all we needed to move the switches and after a lot of head scratching, we got the train onto the mainline and up to where Ron used to work. There wasn't any electricity there, either, and we fussed for a couple of days before we were able to begin transferring the propane from the rail tankers to the large storage tanks. Each tank car held ~22,000 gallons and there were 36 cars, 792,000 gallons. Man, that's a lot of gas!

Hey, I used to say that having bad luck was better than not having any luck, but lately we'd been on a roll. Probably because we'd do darn near anything it would take to try and get through this. Another thing that probably helped was the fact that there weren't a whole lot people still around. Between the war and the volcano, we speculated that we'd maybe lost 90% of our population in the US. For all we cared, the enemy could have 100% casualties and it would have been just about right.

Being located where we were, just NE of LA, that volcano didn't affect us as badly as it did the rest of the country, or so we supposed. My dear wife tells me that 'loose ends' is a sewing term. If she says so, that's fine by me. Anyway, we have a few loose ends here that I ought to cover so the tale can proceed in an orderly fashion. That Trust Fund back in Iowa probably no longer exists. Even if they survived the war, I'm sure that Yellowstone did them in. The federal government was quite a bit later this time than they were when Katrina hit, as in we haven't seen FEMA, yet.

This only important because I got Social Security (past tense), a retirement from Iowa (past tense) and the income from the Trust (past tense). Sharon's only source of income was her small pension from Disney (past tense). No one in the tract had been put back to work formally, either; we weren't alone in the canoe that was up Chit Creek. However, my youngest son was still in the National Guard and he was being paid, just not directly

that is. Which may help to explain why, until the volcano, we were getting things from the National Guard.

After that, it was obvious TEOCAWKI. Maybe that came with the war??? We didn't talk about renewable resources, because until the volcanic winter was over there wasn't any such thing as a renewable resource unless it was the food that we grew in greenhouses. However, it was more like the end of organized civilization, not the planet or our being civilized.

Think about it; we had seed and a source of power, therefore were capable of producing some food. We had dwellings, clothing and that about covers the basics, food, shelter and clothing. We had weapons and could probably get more. Properly stored ammo can last for years. Moreover, we were slowly filling the empty houses by letting selective people move into the tract. By we, I mean the homeowners, not all the residents. Democracy ended the day the bombs fell.

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How much ammo should you have? All you can afford, which is probably less than the life of your rifle barrel. Keep the rifle clean and take good care of it. A match grade barrel will probably stay match grade for at least 5,000 rounds. In all my stories, I recommend 5,000 rounds per rifle, at least 500, preferably 1,000, rounds for each handgun and the same amount for your shotgun. If you take care of that smoothbore, it will shoot several thousand shells. Shotguns shells aren't that hard to reload, all you need is a Lee Loader. I don't know how much plastic changed that, but Lee still makes loaders, so it can't be too bad. Would we reload our empty brass and shells? Maybe and maybe not, we kept the brass just in case. Berdan primed ammo can be reloaded, it's just harder to remove the primer. Never say never! The thing that ruins a barrel is chamber throat erosion.

How many rounds did we have? The number might give you a nose bleed. Most of it was military ammo, packed in those ammo cans that preserve the ammo for years. We stored it in a cool place, the shelter. Unheated, it had a temperature in the mid-fifties. The next question might be, why so many guns? I'd preferred to call them operable spare parts.

The barrel life on the Tac-50 might be longer than 4,000 rounds, but I don't really know. I told the story before, but it's worth repeating because it's fact. Back in '06 when I got my M1A, I bought 2 980-round cases of SA from Aim Surplus and another battle pack from High Desert Storm.

We went to *A Place to Shoot* and put 100 rounds through the rifle. Derek was hitting targets at 400 yards and I stayed at the 100-yard range because the rifle shot the same from point blank out to 200-yards. At 400-yards, you put in 6 clicks of elevation and the bullet hit the target. As I said, the CA list of illegal weapons was my shopping list.

Thing about it was, the law had a grandfather clause and as long as they couldn't prove when you acquired the magazines, they were legal. I still didn't take many chances; I kept some legal magazines around to make the LEOs feel better. We had lots of ammo, more than enough magazines, a few spare parts for some of the rifles and a whole box of new 30 round M16 magazine springs.

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Then the war came, just after Labor Day 2009, and when we came out, winter had arrived in full force. We lived through that and the resultant nuclear summer only to have Yellowstone blow up and create a long term volcanic winter. I've recounted the steps we took to survive and since we're still here, they must have worked. While we couldn't feed everyone, losing 90%, give or take, of our population reduced the number mouths to fill. We weren't altruistic, but sharing/trading/bartering seemed like the logical thing to do. We needed all the help we could get and our salvage efforts ultimately resulted in a lot of help.

Eventually the tract was refilled and even included Geoff and his new wife. I actually gave him the AR-15 back because our 5.56mm rifles were A2s. We never heard from sister Shirley in Des Moines and sister Charlene caught pneumonia and passed on. I had never expected to make 65 and now, at 70, was hanging on for all it was worth. Instead of the wheelchair being a convenience, it was now a necessity. I could drop the Tac-50 soft mount Chris built into the pintle mount Chris built and use my Tac-50 or drop in a rifle rest Chris modeled after the soft mount and have a hand rifle rest.

100 years before, farmer's frequently had large families for 2 reasons, a high infant mortality rate and cheap labor. Our family wasn't large, but it included 2 sons and 2 daughters with (now) husbands. Daniel, Chris and Patti youngest, died unexpectedly in his early 20s. While it was a tough break, Daniel had the mental capacity of a 3 year old and the physique of a powerful man (he could probably kick Godzilla's butt). Although hard to say, it was one of those 'blessings in disguise'.

The remaining AV farmers raise grains, alfalfa, beans, rice and various vegetables plus raised livestock, something that wasn't generally done as much before the war. We city folks grew gardens and some of our younger people either helped the CNG, state Military Reserve or local law enforcement. Both Lancaster and Palmdale formed local police forces staffed by former deputies plus a few 'new hires'. They had a hard time raising revenues and scrapped the sales/use tax for a property tax payable in cash, gold or silver or barter items, usually food. You didn't really think we hadn't had the opportunity to salvage some gold and silver coins in all of our travels, did you? It wasn't our first order of business, but occasionally we found some. We didn't bother with precious stones because we didn't know how to value them and neither did many of the other survivors. With less than 50,000 people left in all of the AV, our needs were down by 90%, too.

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On the subject of BOBs, let me say this, I didn't have one. What I had was a little fanny pack containing a lifeboat ration, 6 packs of water, extra waterproof matches and so forth. The reason I didn't have one was that I didn't drive and rarely went anywhere. When I did, I was never alone because I hadn't driven in years. I still knew how, provided I could figure out all the security devices built into the vehicle. The last time I'd driven was around Christmas 2006, for a distance of 5'. Someone pulled their car in so close that Sharon couldn't get in her door and I got in, crawled over the center hump and she told me how to get the car started.

On same subject, my favorite vehicle was a pickup with 4 on the floor. Back when I learned to drive, none of my father's pickups had automatic transmissions. I occasionally drove his and preferred it to the other F-100 we had, which was a year newer. Who knows maybe I could get Damon to look around and find a serviceable F-100. Here in southern Kalifornia, they usually don't rust out.

When you think about it, we're living in what one could call the overdue time. Nobody knows about Long Valley because it hasn't repeated, yet. Based upon the study of lava flows of basalt throughout the world, it has been proposed that the Earth's magnetic field reverses at intervals, ranging from tens of thousands to many millions of years, with an average interval of approximately 250,000 years. The last such event, called the Brunhes-Matuyama reversal, is theorized to have occurred some 780,000 years ago.

There is no clear theory as to how the geomagnetic reversals might have occurred. Some scientists have produced models for the core of the Earth wherein the magnetic field is only quasi-stable and the poles can spontaneously migrate from one orientation to the other over the course of a few hundred to a few thousand years. Other scientists propose that the geodynamo first turns itself off, either spontaneously or through some external action like a comet impact, and then restarts itself with the magnetic "North" pole pointing either North or South. External events are not likely to be routine causes of magnetic field reversals due to the lack of a correlation between the age of impact craters and the timing of reversals. Regardless of the cause, when magnetic "North" reappears in the opposite direction this is a reversal, whereas turning off and returning in the same direction is called a geomagnetic excursion.

At present, the overall geomagnetic field is becoming weaker at a rate which would, if it continues, cause the dipole field to temporarily collapse by 3000-4000 AD. The South Atlantic Anomaly is believed by some to be a product of this. The present strong deterioration corresponds to a 10-15% decline over the last 150 years and has accelerated in the past several years; however, geomagnetic intensity has declined almost continuously from a maximum 35% above the modern value achieved approximately 2000 years ago. The rate of decrease and the current strength are within the normal range of variation, as shown by the record of past magnetic fields recorded in rocks.

One theory does contend that the core of the Earth is not iron but much denser atoms. Nuclear reactions as replicated in a fast breeder reactor are suggested to take place and this accounts for the change in the Earth's magnetic field.

Using a magnetic detector (a variant of a compass), scientists have measured the historical direction of the Earth's magnetic field, by studying sequences of relatively iron-rich lava flows. Typically such layers have been found to record the direction of Earth's magnetic field when they cool. They have found that the poles have shifted a number of times throughout the past. We're about 500,000 years overdue on that one.

CFI and Fleataxi have written about a major blast of sun radiation (CME) and I commented on the subject. This isn't the same thing although it's possible that it may seem like the same phenomena. The Earth's magnetic field protects us from solar radiation, but what would happen during the period it was swapping poles?

The magnetosphere shields the surface of the Earth from the charged particles of the solar wind. It is compressed on the day (Sun) side due to the force of the arriving particles, and extended on the night side. The Earth's magnetosphere was discovered in 1958 by Explorer I during the research performed for the International Geophysical Year. Before this, scientists knew that electric currents flowed in space, because solar eruptions sometimes led to "magnetic storm" disturbances. No one knew, however, where those currents flowed and why, or that the solar wind existed. In August and September of 1958, Project Argus was performed to test a theory about the formation of radiation belts that may have tactical use in war.

You may recall that about that time we learned of the Van Allen Belt, named after a professor at the University of Iowa. Inside the magnetosphere are the Van Allen radiation belts, named for the American physicist James A. Van Allen who discovered them in 1958. The Van Allen belts are regions where charged particles from the Sun and from cosmic rays are trapped and sent into spiral paths along the lines of Earth's magnetic field. The radiation belts thereby shield Earth's surface from these highly energetic particles. Occasionally, however, due to extremely strong magnetic fields on the Sun's surface, which are visible as sunspots, a brief burst of highly energetic particles streams along with the solar wind. Because Earth's magnetic field lines converge and are closest to the surface at the poles, some of these energetic particles sneak through and interact with Earth's atmosphere, creating the phenomenon known as an aurora.

You Can Run – Chapter 14

Back on April 7, 2007, Sharon unloaded the Daewoo and bought a new Kia Rondo, it should have been paid for before it wore out. It survived the war and the eruption and wasn't half bad on gas. It turned out to be far cheaper than we ever imagined, the finance company was in LA. It looks like a SUV but it's not; I'm told that's important because the car insurance is cheaper. It looks like a SUV, but it's whatever they say it is. In a way, it's like a station wagon the back and middle rows of seats fold down allowing you to haul a lot of stuff. Amy's Kia Sportage is bigger although the only difference I could find was the distance from the seat to the ground, it's further on the Sportage. All I have to say about that is I hope the vehicles are made in SOUTH Korea. Yes, they still make AMERICAN cars in the US, but we can't afford one.

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I ask Sharon about something I wanted and she said, "Read Ecclesiastes Chapter 3."

"I know that one, Turn, Turn, Turn by Pete Seeger and later recorded by the Byrds."

"Huh?"

*To everything, turn, turn, turn
There is a season, turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under heaven
A time to be born, a time to die
A time to plant, a time to reap
A time to kill, a time to heal
A time to laugh, a time to weep*

*To everything, turn, turn, turn
There is a season, turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under heaven
A time to build up, a time to break down
A time to dance, a time to mourn
A time to cast away stones
A time to gather stones together*

*To everything, turn, turn, turn
There is a season, turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under heaven
A time of love, a time of hate
A time of war, a time of peace
A time you may embrace
A time to refrain from embracing*

To everything, turn, turn, turn

*There is a season, turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under heaven
A time to gain, a time to lose
A time to rend, a time to sew
A time to love, a time to hate
A time for peace, I swear it's not too late*

"Do you remember what Charlie told Maverick in Top Gun?"

"She said a lot of things."

"She said, 'Don't give up your day job'. I wouldn't if I were you."

"I don't work."

"Get a job."

The actual Bible verses from the KJV are:

- 1 To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven:*
- 2 A time to be born, and a time to die; a time to plant, and a time to pluck up that which is planted;*
- 3 A time to kill, and a time to heal; a time to break down, and a time to build up;*
- 4 A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance;*
- 5 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; a time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;*
- 6 A time to get, and a time to lose; a time to keep, and a time to cast away;*
- 7 A time to rend, and a time to sew; a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;*
- 8 A time to love, and a time to hate; a time of war, and a time of peace.*

It seems appropriate, I preach preparedness and Ecclesiastes is also called The Preacher. The work consists of personal or autobiographic matter, largely expressed in aphorisms and maxims illuminated in terse paragraphs with reflections on the meaning of life and the best way of life. The work emphatically proclaims all the actions of man to be inherently "futile" and/or "meaningless," as the lives of both wise and foolish men end in death. While the teacher clearly promotes wisdom for the enjoyment of an earthly life, he is unable to ascribe eternal meaning to it. In light of this perceived senselessness, the teacher suggests that one should enjoy the simple pleasures of daily life, such as eating, drinking, and taking enjoyment in one's wife and work, which are gifts from the hand of God.

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Another thing that comes to mind is suppressors. You'll find them in nearly every story I write. You rarely hear about them being used, for good reason, a suppressor is nothing more than an improved flashhider from my viewpoint. They're good at night to make it

more difficult for the other guy to locate you. They served more to hide you than eliminate the sounds of a weapon being fired. That said, reducing the sound by 30+ decibels is sometimes a good thing. You want a weapon that doesn't make any sound and you're describing a .22 with subsonic ammo and in integral suppressor. A suppressor makes you invisible.

Suppressors were desirable under the idea of: would rather have it and not need it; or would you rather need it and not have it? More is usually better, but that's not always the case. More of a food you can't stand to eat, for example, might not be good. Lance and Elvia bought the 1-year deluxe food rations from Walton Feed whereas we bought what we usually eat. I've often wondered who made out better.

Back on the subject of the possible 3rd disaster, this pole swapping had me concerned. If it happened quickly, we might not get a whole lot of excessive solar radiation. If it happened over a long period of time, would we be without the magnetosphere for a long time and end up being burned up by the sun? It's a fair question because that last time it happened was $\frac{3}{4}$ million years ago.

We had a lot of down time waiting for that next disaster. Roughly 5 years, give or take and then when we got it, it wasn't what we expected. Clarence was watching the sky for us, I used a compass daily to see if the declination changed thereby indicating the magnetic pole was moving and I have no idea what Ron was doing. We'd get together every morning and afternoon for coffee unless one of the wives had some honey-do's.

I kept bringing up the possibility of going back to Iowa to see if we could get more money from the bank. Both Ron and Clarence insisted that if the bank were still there, and they could give me the money, it wouldn't make any difference because we didn't use money anymore. They were right; of course, we grew most of our food and did a fair amount of salvaging. Those PRI products made all the difference, for now. We could restore both gas and diesel and maintain it until we burned it up.

One local farmer put in rapeseed so he could produce biodiesel and another planted corn and produced ethanol. It seemed like California had once more become a good place to live. Those draconian gun laws were still on the books and we ignored them. During the past couple of years, Derek had gone to MCLB, Barstow and we were very well equipped. I now had 4 MUNS. The regular Hummers are the military version of a flex fuel vehicle and will run on about anything. He got some new and some used and we parked our personal vehicles and switched to the Hummers. These were M1114 with ring mounts and while we all agreed we probably wouldn't need them, we mounted either a M240, M2 or Mk19 with ample reloads.

Sometime in the middle years we risked a trip to Fresno and got some of the Pinnacle Dragon Skin body armor. We weren't sure why we did that, but it seemed like the thing to do at the time. Many of the local grocery stores had become Farmer's Markets and they charged a small percentage of your products for space rental. We no longer sold

stuff from in front of the barricade; we got more customers by putting up a display at the old Albertson's.

I hadn't figured on living this long, but I suppose getting off my butt and moving around some had its benefits. By now we were smoking pipe tobacco and rolling our own. That really cut back on the smoking, let me tell you. We used a rolling machine we found in a tobacco store and had loaded up on all the pipe tobacco and cigarette papers we could find. One day Damon came screaming in pedal to the metal returning from Victorville.

"We have problems."

"Really? You went to Victorville, didn't you? What kind of trouble can a person get into in Victorville?"

"I didn't do anything. I'd finished up and was about a 2-3 blocks west of I-15 when a bunch of vehicles came off the southbound I-15 exit. Most of them turned east, but a couple turned west. I took a quick right turn and parked before they could see me. These guys were MZBs, Dad and I don't use the term loosely."

"I'd imagine not since you got that new Harley. What happened next?"

"I sat and waited and about 30 minutes later, they came back on Palmdale Road headed for downtown. I gave them another 10 minutes and turned the pickup around and headed home. I don't think they'll find much in Victorville and they could come here next."

"They could just as easily get back on I-15 and drive down to San Bernardino."

"They could, but it was nuked and they won't find anything there. The best way to get to LA from Victorville is to come west on 18 and 138 to pick up 14."

"Why didn't you hang out and learn some more about these people?"

"Because, I made out pretty good over there and had a full pickup and full trailer. We have more pasta, beans, rice, spices and even a pallet of coffee."

"Did you find me any Humalin?"

"Yes, 30 bottles. It's all expired, but you said that didn't matter so I brought it."

"According to the package insert it has an infinite shelf life so long as the seal is in place, with or without refrigeration."

"I got you needles, too."

"Thanks, Damon. Get your brother and we'll get together with Ron and Clarence and talk this over. Maybe we need to boot this upstairs to Lance and security."

"How many were there, Damon?"

"I really couldn't tell, maybe 50, maybe 75."

"Was that their entire force or were they just a lead element?"

"I have no idea."

"Dad, I could probably find a few of the soldiers from Company B and raise a small force. They'd have a vested interest in protecting Palmdale. However, I think you should take this information to Lance and he should turn out the security force."

"You should tell him, Derek, you're still his assistant."

"I'll be gone. Tell him I sent you."

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"Hi Gary how are you doing? Is something up?"

"I'm fine, but Derek said I should share this information with you while he's out trying to reassemble some of the National Guard."

"Do we have a problem?"

"Hard to say, Lance. Damon was salvaging in Victorville when a group he said could number from 50-75 blew into town. It might be nothing but if they're on the way to LA, they could come this way. Derek seemed to think we should turn out the Security Force."

"And he's gathering National Guard to help?"

"Those that he can find."

"I'll get the word out and we'll assemble as many as we can. Some of them will be at work of course, so I doubt we'll have more than one-third of the force."

During the past 5 years, a few minor manufacturing firms had opened up in the AV and some people worked for one of them. Others worked on the local farms that produced a majority of the food for the area. It was different now, the AV didn't grow just alfalfa and onions; it grew a majority of the food we ate that wasn't home grown. One business re-loaded ammo using components they manufactured. Most of the firms produced some

kind of necessity that everyone depended on. One recycled glass and made canning jars while another manufactured lids and various metal products.

By this time, our only source of power was those wind turbines up at Tehachapi. All in all, the AV tried to be self-sufficient and we managed. The supply of medicines had long since dried up and a couple of locals produced what they described as Holistic compounds. We called them witch doctors behind their backs, but we used their compounds with much success. About the only thing I couldn't get from them was my Humalin and some of the bottles Damon found were no good and had to be discarded. If the white stuff in the bottle stuck to the bottom or clumped the bottle was discarded.

In many ways, little had changed over the past 5 years. We hadn't had outsiders coming into town trying to take what we had; maybe we were living on borrowed time. I'd lost my teeth and had dentures now, I was almost deaf, but could read lips, more or less. Overall, we were older than before the war and Yellowstone, but in better physical health, allowing for our advancing age. One thing that definitely hadn't changed was our personalities.

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Not that it matters now, but I suppose we'd have been forewarned if Clarence had kept his eye on the sky. As it turned out, we had our 3rd disaster when that rock came out of the sun. It was a big one and must have hit North American somewhere near Nevada. We only had a few minutes and weren't in the shelter when the blast wave hit....

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